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Near East & South Asia

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-95-008

CONTENTS

12 January 1995

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Meeting Held on Combating Extremist Islamic Groups *[AL-MAJD 9 Jan]* 1
Jordanian-Egyptian-Israeli Talks 'Successful' *[MA'ARIV 11 Jan]* 1

Arab-Israeli Talks

MK's, PA Officials Discuss 'Obstacles to Peace' *[Jerusalem Radio]* 1
No Maps on Redeployment Presented to Palestinians *[DAVAR 11 Jan]* 1
Oman Delays Setting Up Israeli Interest Section *[Jerusalem Radio]* 2
Collapse of U.S. Middle East Policy Seen *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 10 Jan]* 2

Inter-Arab Affairs

'Arafat Asks Brotherhood To Mediate PLO, Hamas *[AFP]* 2
League Chief Says Boycott of Israel Still in Force *[MENA]* 3
Kuwaiti Diplomat Proposes Arab Security Council *[MENA]* 3
Media Committee Agrees To Confront 'Terrorism' *[MENA]* 3

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-NUR 28 Dec 3
Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 3 Jan 4

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Returns From Cairo, Makes Statement *[Jericho VOP]* 5
Sha'th: Rabin To Present Redeployment Maps *[Jericho VOP]* 6
Al-Husayni, Hamas Spokesman Comment on Elections *[AL-SAFIR 7 Jan]* 6
Qaddumi Cites Problems in Peace Process *[AFP]* 6
Minister on PA Financial Situation, Funding Received *[MENA]* 6
Fatah Said To Prepare for IDF Redeployment *[Jerusalem TV]* 7
Gaza Security Chief Interviewed on Bus Incident *[Jerusalem International]* 7
Hamas Denies Link With Document 'Leaked' by PA *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 11 Jan]* .. 7

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Reportage on Leaders' Talks in Rome Continues 8
    FFS: No 'Internationalized' Solutions *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 10 Jan]* 8
    Platform To Condemn Violence *[Paris International]* 8
    Ali Yahia: Hope Given *[Paris Radio]* 8
    State To Eliminate 'Terrorism' *[Algiers TV]* 9
Armed Attack Reported on 2 Foreign Priests *[Paris Radio]* 9
Batna Company Bus Attacked; 12 Killed *[Algiers Radio]* 9

Egypt

Mubarak Addresses Writers on Various Issues *[MENA]* 9
Mubarak Comments on Rabin's 'War' Remarks *[Cairo Radio]* 11
Rabin's 'Hint' at Force 'Unacceptable' *[London AL-HAYAH 11 Jan]* 12

Press Denounces Israeli 'Despotism' *[MENA]* 12
Israeli Publishers Banned From Cairo Book Fair *[Jerusalem Radio]* 13
Iraq Reportedly Invited to Book Fair *[AFP]* 13
Al-Baz on Alexandria Summit, U.S. Relations *[MENA]* 13
Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah Now Based in Mallawi *[AFP]* 14
Al-Jama'ah Suspected in Killing of Policeman *[AFP]* 15
Mufti, Anglican Head Touring U.S. *[MENA]* 15

Morocco

Christopher Gives Delegation Clinton Message *[Rabat Radio]* 15
Basri Dispute Scuttles Alternative Government *[MAP]* 15
Royal Court on Decision To Form Government *[Rabat Radio]* 16

Sudan

Rejection of IGADD Proposal Reiterated *[Omdurman Radio]* 16
Chadian Envoy Praises Border Demarcation Plan *[Omdurman Radio]* 16
Committee To Pursue Agreements With China *[Omdurman Radio]* 17
Election Official on Voter Registration Drive *[Omdurman Radio]* 17

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Kuwait

Official: Lifting of Iraq Sanctions UN Matter *[KUNA]* 18
British Envoy Opposed To Opening Office in Iraq *[KUNA]* 18

Qatar

Cabinet Regrets 'Ferocious' Operations in Chechnya *[WAKH]* 19

Saudi Arabia

Al-Shar' Riyadh Visit Linked to Iranian-Gulf Ties *[London AL-HAYAH 11 Jan]* 19
King Fahd Addresses Shura Council *[SPA]* 19
*New Commercial Port Completed at Diba' *[London AL-MAJALLAH 27 Nov]* 21

United Arab Emirates

Decree Appoints Deputy Ruler of Dubai *[AL-BAYAN 5 Jan]* 23
Minister on Kuwaiti Prisoners, 'Amity' *[INA]* 23

Yemen

President's Saudi Visit Called Off After Border Clash *[AFP]* 24

IRAQ

'Aziz Accuses U.S. of Staging 'Theatrical Shows' *[Baghdad Radio]* 25
    Meets Envoys at United Nations *[INA]* 25
Charge to Iran on Israeli Contacts, Regional Ties *[SALAM 28 Dec]* 25
PUK Official on Cease-Fire, Foreign Pressure *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 27
Attack on Turkmens, Effort To Increase Influence Reported *[TURKISH DAILY NEWS 9 Jan]* 28
Al-Da'wah Party Delegation Reportedly Meets Regime *[AL-SHIRA' 2 Jan]* 29
Constitutional Monarchists on Kurdistan, Opposition Unity *[London AL-HAYAH 9 Jan]* 29
Saddam Chairs Cabinet Session, Praises Engineers *[Baghdad Radio]* 29

ISRAEL

No-Confidence Motion Submitted Over Bus Incident *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 30
Rabin on Building Beyond Green Line in Jerusalem *[HA'ARETZ 11 Jan]* 30

Gur: Country Must Assume Enemies Have Nuclear Option *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 30
'Source' Confirms 'Arafat Orders To Attack IDF *[DAVAR 11 Jan]* 31
'Senior' Palestinian Official Detained in Jerusalem *[Jerusalem Radio]* 31
Rabin, Husayn Expected To Meet on Difficulties in Ties *[Jerusalem New Channel 2 TV]* 31
Turkey Protests Treatment of Foreign Workers *[AFP]* 31
Sources Deny Allowing CIA To Debrief Dirani *[MA'ARIV 11 Jan]* 32
Meretz Ministers Divided on Future of 'Etzyon Bloc *[DAVAR 11 Jan]* 32
UN Ambassador: No New Settlements, No Investment *[Jerusalem Radio]* 32
Demonstrators Clash With Soldiers Near 'Aley Zahav *[Jerusalem Radio]* 32
Settlers Build West Bank Road at Own Expense *[Jerusalem Radio]* 33
'Terrorist' Youth Killed in Gaza Blast *[Jerusalem Radio]* 33
Rabin's Relations With Cabinet Members Viewed *[MA'ARIV 6 Jan]* 33

JORDAN

Jordanian-Israeli Water Committee Meets in Tiberias *[Amman Radio]* 35
Postal Services With Israel, Self-Rule Areas To Begin *[AL-ASWAQ 13 Dec]* 35
Prime Minister Urges Cooperation With House *[Amman Radio]* 35

LEBANON

Dallul on Security Committee, Peace *[AL-SAFIR 7 Jan]* 36
Al-Hariri: Israeli Domination Contrary to Peace *[Beirut Radio]* 38
IDF Reportedly Kills 4 'Terrorists' in South *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 38

SYRIA

Israeli Settlement Activity, 'Racist' Laws Assailed *[AL-BA'TH 4 Jan]* 39
Paper Highlights Israel's 'Aggressive Intentions' *[AL-BA'TH 8 Jan]* 39
Self-Rule Authority Said Involved in Israeli 'Crimes' *[AL-BA'TH 8 Jan]* 39
Papers Comment on Rabin Government 'Threats' *[Damascus Radio]* 40
PLO's Qaddumi Arrives in Damascus, Speaks *[Damascus TV]* 41
Syrian-Kuwaiti Committee Concludes Meetings *[Damascus Radio]* 41
    Transit Accord Signed *[KUNA]* 41

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Anti-Rabbani Alliance Announces Cease-Fire *[IRNA]* 43
Security Chief: Conditions 'Appropriate' for Peace *[Kabul Radio]* 43
Russian Jets Reportedly Raid Badakshan Village *[Kabul Radio]* 43

Bangladesh

Decision on Opposition Resignation Coming Soon *[Dhaka Radio]* 43
By-Elections for Empty Parliament Seats Possible *[DAINIK INQILAB 4 Jan]* 43

India

U.S. Defense Secretary Perry Arrives in Delhi 44
    'Landmark' Agreement Signed *[Delhi Radio]* 44
    Party Criticizes Pact *[Delhi Radio]* 44
    U.S. Interest in Country 'Increasing' *[INDIAN EXPRESS 12 Jan]* 44

Iran

U.S. Seen Supporting Russian 'Crushing' of Chechens *[Tehran Radio]* 45
Paper Condemns MKO Attendance at Syrian Conference *[KEYHAN 27 Dec]* 45
Official Backs Egypt's Warning to Israel *[IRNA]* 46

- Problems Seen in Gaza-Jericho Accord *[Tehran Radio]* 46
- 'Arafat's 'Sell-Out Deal' Will Bear No Fruit *[Tehran Radio]* 46
- Philippines Envoy Summoned Over Expulsion Incident *[Tehran Radio]* 47
- Transport Agreement Signed With Bangladesh *[Tehran TV]* 47
- Moldova Accord Covers Petroleum Sale, Development *[IRNA]* 47
- Guardian Council Urges Satellite Bill Amendment *[IRNA]* 47
- Presidential Visit, New Developments in Provinces 48
  - Wind-Activated Power Plant To Operate *[IRNA]* 48
  - Drugs Cause of Baluchestan 'Backwardness' *[IRNA]* 48
  - 4 New Satellite Stations in Kermanshah *[Tehran Radio]* 48
  - Rafsanjani Attends Council Meeting *[Tehran Radio]* 49

Pakistan

- Reaction to Defense Secretary Perry's Visit 49
  - Media Roundup *[Islamabad Radio, etc.]* 49
  - 'Fine Print' Not Yet Clear *[THE NEWS 12 Jan]* 50
  - Editorial Evaluates Results *[THE FRONTIER POST 12 Jan]* 51
  - Perry Assurances to Leaders Welcomed *[KHABRAIN 12 Jan]* 51
- Editorial Chides UK's Hurd for Kashmir Remarks *[THE MUSLIM 11 Jan]* 52
- Ministers Meet Belarus Deputy Prime Minister *[Islamabad TV]* 53
- Accord Reached With Kuwaiti Petroleum Firm *[Islamabad Radio]* 53
- Japan To Give $300-Million Loan for 2 Years *[Islamabad Radio]* 53
- Official Denies Afghan Mercenaries Sent to Chechnya *[AFP]* 53

Sri Lanka

- Government Cease-Fire With LTTE Reportedly Holds 54
  - Newspapers Commend Peace Efforts *[Colombo International]* 54
  - Tamil Parties Express Optimism *[Colombo International]* 54
  - Cease-Fire Continues To Hold *[LANKAPUVATH]* 54
  - 3rd Round of Talks Scheduled *[Colombo International]* 55
- Government Accused of Violating Truce *[AFP]* 55
- Police Step Up Security Ahead of Pope Visit *[AFP]* 55

Meeting Held on Combating Extremist Islamic Groups

JN0901120695 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 9 Jan 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources of the Palestinian Authority have said a high-level security meeting was held in Amman last month between representatives of Jordan, Egypt, Israel, and the United States.

These sources quoted Israeli security officials as saying that the meeting mainly concentrated on ways of combating the extremist Islamic groups.

Jordanian-Egyptian-Israeli Talks 'Successful'

TA1101131395 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 11 Jan 95 p 2

[Report by Hemi Shalev]

[FBIS Translated Text] The armies of Jordan, Egypt, and Israel will cooperate to prevent infiltrations across the borders of the three countries. This was agreed in the first meeting of its kind between the liaison officers of all three armies, held in Elat last week.

The meeting, which began in strict secrecy, was successful. Among other things, it was decided to hold regular meetings, the next one of which will be held at the end of the Ramadan fast next month. The three participants expressed the hope that a Syrian officer will join the discussions soon.

Arab-Israeli Talks

MK's, PA Officials Discuss 'Obstacles to Peace'

TA1001185795 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 10 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Labor and Meretz Knesset members [MK's] met today with representatives of the Palestinian Authority [PA] at the Notre Dame Hotel in East Jerusalem. The Palestinian representatives, as well as several left-wing MK's, condemned the activity conducted by the Elqana settlers today, warning against serious damage to the peace process. Our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky reports:

[Begin Bushinsky recording] The Israeli Government is being duplicitous, says Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, who is responsible for the information portfolio in the PA; on one hand, it wants peace, and on the other, the settlers and the bulldozers are continuing their work in Elqana. Continued activity such as that in Elqana today, 'Abd-Rabbuh said, proves that the Israeli Government does not want peace and may eventually put the lid on the peace process.

In the first meeting of its kind between Labor and Meretz MK's and PA representatives, held in East Jerusalem, the participants discussed issues they called obstacles to peace.

Hanan 'Ashrawi, one of the participants, said that the Jerusalem issue is also on the agenda. The law designed to restrict Palestinian political activity will only put the peace process off track. 'Ashrawi claims that the Israeli Government promised that a few female Palestinian prisoners will be released soon.

Meretz MK Dedi Zucker, another participant in the meeting, said that the Jerusalem issue is not on the agenda and that he and his colleagues came to express support for peace and to point to obstacles such as terror and settlements. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1700 GMT on 10 January reports that "the Likud condemns the meeting between the coalition MK's and Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the Likud faction states that the left is helping the PLO establish its capital in Jerusalem."]

No Maps on Redeployment Presented to Palestinians

TA1101154795 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 11 Jan 95 pp 1, 3

[Report by Moti Bassok]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel has not yet presented the Palestinians with maps of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment in the West Bank but made it clear to them that they will receive most of the area after they reach agreements with Israel on the details of the interim arrangement.

Minister Yosi Sarid, who is a member of the team negotiating with the Palestinians, noted yesterday that despite the fact that the negotiations with the Palestinians on the interim arrangement have just begun, it is more or less clear to the Palestinians—from their talks with Israeli officials, as well—what Israel intends to propose to them. Sarid believes that on the basis of Yasir 'Arafat's public statements about understanding for Israel's security needs, one can assume that the two sides will ultimately reach an agreement, following prolonged and exhausting negotiations.

The proposal Israel submitted to the Palestinians is based on the lessons learned from implementing the first stage of the Declaration of Principles and the Cairo accord, especially in the security sphere. Upon implementing the next stage of the agreement, the IDF will withdraw from the centers of all towns that are not considered problematic from the security point of view, such as Janin, Ramallah, and Bethlehem; it will effect a partial withdrawal from the centers of some of the towns with security problems, such as Nabulus; and it will leave the same number of troops as today in particularly problematic towns, such as Hebron.

A particularly difficult problem which will require a great deal of goodwill on both sides is the question of control of major roads and the nature of movement on them.

All in all, approximately 70-80 percent of the West Bank area will be handed over to Palestinian control, and this will completely change the West Bank map. A Jerusalem political element noted yesterday that this will also completely change Yasir 'Arafat's status on the eve of elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. If, according to the latest poll in the territories, the extent of support for 'Arafat stands at 46 percent, he will gain much higher percentages in the elections after he controls most of the West Bank.

A Jerusalem political element noted that the IDF has been preparing the interim arrangement maps for several months. According to this element, the IDF is preparing different maps for different situations. Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has seen some of the maps.

The element noted that, parallel to the public talks between Israel and the Palestinians, almost daily talks are also held by the professional military levels of both sides, and quite a bit of progress has been achieved in them. Nonetheless, the major decisions will be made in the Rabin-'Arafat meeting tomorrow. [passage omitted]

Oman Delays Setting Up Israeli Interest Section

TA1101060595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Oman is delaying setting up an Israeli interests section in its territory. The two countries had agreed to begin operating interests offices on each other's territory this month. To that end, Foreign Minister Peres was to have met in Europe with his Omani counterpart, but Oman has put off the plans by several months.

Qol Yisra'el's diplomatic correspondent says it appears this will also affect Qatar's willingness to go ahead with ties with Israel.

Diplomatic circles in Jerusalem say they believe a major factor in the delay was the Alexandria summit, during which Arab leaders expressed anger over the visit to Oman by Prime Minister Rabin.

Collapse of U.S. Middle East Policy Seen

MM1101132795 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Jan 95 p 9

[Article by Bilal al-Hasan: "A Wavering Strategy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington wants to implement a comprehensive peace strategy in the Middle East, but its partiality with Israel robs it of all logic.

A legitimate question arises in 1995 about the U.S. strategy in the Middle East. All current indications point to the failure of that strategy and, one might even say, its collapse. U.S. strategy in the Middle East has focused on two main points: Finding a durable and final solution to the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, and advanced and nuclear weapons disarmament in the region. In both instances we are now witnessing a freeze verging on collapse. In connection with the first item, we see the Oslo agreement faltering and we see a deadly stagnation in the Gaza and Jericho autonomy experiment. We hear scarcely anything about any work by the autonomy government. We do not hear about a minister inaugurating a project or a director announcing the birth of or the completion of the organization of an establishment, or a businessman opening a company, and nothing about a new school or a new hospital. All we hear about is a panting rush by one or two men to meet with Israeli officials and plead for concessions from them, only to be met with an Israel arrogance bordering on insult. On the other hand we see a new Israeli plan emerging which is unrelated to the Oslo agreement or any security or economic agreements reached. The Palestinian elections are impeded, redeployment of the Israeli forces is rejected, the settlements are expanded, and Palestinian policemen are being killed openly and in broad daylight without so much as an Israeli apology for it but, instead, an Israeli assertion that the policemen started it and were punished for doing so.

Organized murder squads, with the knowledge and orders of Defense Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, are roaming the towns and villages of the West Bank hunting people and activists who reject the occupation and settlement. On top of all that, Nabil Sha'th, the Palestinian negotiator, threatens to withdraw from the negotiations. If only he would!

We see a deadlock in the negotiations with Syria and Lebanon and a failure to draw practical conclusions from the Jordanian-Israeli agreement. We even see an emerging strategic crisis between Egypt and Israel over Israel's nuclear weapons, with Israel refusing to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and Egypt threatening to refuse to renew its signature of that treaty unless Israel does so, which means that even the formidable Camp David agreement is threatened with a freeze exceeding the coolness that has so far prevailed.

In the midst of that negative overall picture a new problem emerges, the problem of Iran and its determined efforts to develop its nuclear research program, with Israeli and U.S. fears that such a development would carry the possibility of Iran's producing its own nuclear bomb in five or 10 years. Hence the Israeli anger and open threats to destroy the nuclear reactors in Iran.

In the midst of all this, the United States intercedes under the banner of impartial mediator, but U.S. impartiality stops at Yitzhaq Rabin's door.

What is significant is that the entire U.S. strategy in the Middle East is threatened with failure. The main cause of the U.S. failure is partiality, alignment with Israeli demands, and adamant failure to understand the demands of others. Any strategy is liable to fail when it has no logical foundations and when it only tries to impose things by force. That is what we are seeing now.

Inter-Arab Affairs

'Arafat Asks Brotherhood To Mediate PLO, Hamas

NC1101184595 Paris AFP in English 1800 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan 11 (AFP)—PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat has asked the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to mediate between his organization and the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), the Brotherhood said Wednesday [11 January].

"The head of the PLO wants to avoid inter-Palestinian fighting and seeks the assistance of all those who can help," said Mahmud al-Hudaybi, a Brotherhood leader who took part in a meeting here with 'Arafat on Tuesday.

"The main issue raised in the meeting was how to avoid bloodshed between Palestinians," he told AFP.

'Arafat held talks with Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi before the two-hour encounter with leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has no legal status but is tolerated by the Egyptian authorities.

In November, 13 people were killed in clashes between Hamas supporters and 'Arafat's police force in autonomous Gaza. Hamas is a fierce opponent of the PLO's self-rule deal with Israel.

League Chief Says Boycott of Israel Still in Force

NC1101144095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1202 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Jan—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has stated that the direct boycott of Israel is still in force and that the Arab League insists on it because it is considered a primary boycott, the lifting of which requires the establishment of comprehensive peace with Israel.

In an interview to be published in the 13 January issue of the weekly magazine AL-MUSAWWAR, 'Abd-al-Majid said that each Arab state has the right to lift the secondary and tertiary boycott under the current circumstances, indicating that this does not involve dealing with Israel, but with companies.

On the demarcation of borders among Arab states, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said the topic has been in existence since before the establishment of the Arab League, which cannot intervene unless the parties concerned ask it to do so.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid described the Alexandria tripartite summit as an important and historic turning point in favor of the Arab situation and the Arab League.

Kuwaiti Diplomat Proposes Arab Security Council

NC1201071195 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2250 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Jan (MENA)—Kuwaiti Ambassador in Cairo 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Bu'ayjan has called for establishing a new Arab regional order based on the grounds that national security and interests take precedence over pan-Arab security.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM on Thursday [12 January], he suggested that this new order begin by setting up an Arab security council comprised of eight members. Four of them, he said, should be permanent members and represent influential countries in the Arab world—such as Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco—and four non-permanent members to be elected every two years. He added that two of these four non-permanent members should represent the Arab countries in Asia and the other two represent Arab countries in Africa.

He demanded that this council have a charter based on promoting Arab countries' interests, avoiding mutual hostility, competition, and adventure, and providing economic, military, and cultural means for protecting the Arab world and defending its interests.

The Kuwaiti ambassador explained that such a council could examine and solve existing Arab problems; and if it agrees on a formula, it should invite the Arab leaders to a summit to ratify the council's resolutions.

As for the Arab League's current agencies, he proposed that they act as a general secretariat for this council

He noted that this organization's resolutions must not contradict the will and sovereignty of the Arab League member states and their international agreements.

He said such a council should have the authority to form Arab forces to contain potential crises that might jeopardize the security of any Arab country.

Media Committee Agrees To Confront 'Terrorism'

NC1101193495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1740 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 11 Jan (MENA)—The Arab Media Standing Committee [AMSC] is to hold its final session at the Arab League Secretariat tomorrow morning, Thursday [12 January].

Daw Suwaydan, assistant secretary general of the Arab League for media affairs, said the committee endorsed in its session today a study submitted by Libya on devising an Arab media strategy for the 21st century. The AMSC agreed to form a special committee to examine the motion and forward a report on it to the Arab Information Ministers Council when it meets for its next session in July.

He added that the AMSC concluded the discussion of all 14 topics on its agenda on which resolutions and recommendations will be announced in the final session.

He said one of the most important topics passed in today's meetings was one concerning media cooperation to confront terrorism and extremism, provision of technical and media aid for the Palestinian National Authority, and coordination in Arab satellite channels regarding media, news reports, and production. [passage omitted]

He said a seminar will be held in Bahrain to devise Arab technical and strategic plans for cooperation in satellite channels and to set up a higher council for coordination among the Arab countries on satellite channels and to consolidate action in this field.

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-NUR 28 Dec

NC0801135595

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 28 December edition of the Arabic-language newspaper AL-NUR that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Religious Committee Views Draft Marriage Document
2. Article Discusses U.S. Stance on Muslims
3. Writer Criticizes Advocates of 'Secularism, Westernization'
4. Secularists Accused of Crusade Against Islam
5. Former Speaker Views Application of Islamic Shari'ah
6. Religious College Dean Defends al-Azhar

RELIGIOUS COMMITTEE VIEWS DRAFT MARRIAGE DOCUMENT

An unattributed 120-word report on page 1 says that the Religious Decrees Committee of al-Azhar has warned the National Committee for Women to act slowly in drafting a new marriage document and to submit it to the Islamic Research Commission before passing it.

The Religious Decrees Committee Secretary General Shaykh al-Sayyid al-'Iraqi Shams-al-Din said the information published so far on this document confirms that it violates the Islamic shari'ah provisions, especially regarding the wife's right to divorce herself if her husband marries another woman.

ARTICLE DISCUSSES U.S. STANCE ON MUSLIMS

An unattributed 1,100-word article on page 2 discusses the U.S. stances on Muslim countries. It claims that apparent U.S. support for Bosnian Muslims was not prompted by principles of justice and equality but came as a means of pressure on Europe to assert its presence. The battle for influence between the United States and Europe, the article says, involves the Algerian crisis, as both Europe and the United States reject an Islamic movement assuming power in any Islamic country.

In Sudan, the article continues, the United States confronts the Islamic presence in power and works to blockade and subjugate Sudan.

The article notes: "The explanation for the U.S. stance is simple. The United States hates Muslim unity and seeks a division."

WRITER CRITICIZES ADVOCATES OF 'SECULARISM, WESTERNIZATION'

In an approximately 1,800-word article on page 3, Dr. 'Abd-al-Mu'ti Bayyumi views the "enlightenment" movement and seeks the opinion of several scholars and former university deans on the issue.

He begins by saying: "Enlightenment is the latest slogan raised by the advocates of Westernization and secularism to attack anything Islamic in our lives. In the name of enlightenment and under its slogan, the veil is being attacked because, in their view, it veils the mind. Under the banner of enlightenment, religious subjects, Koranic texts, and prophetic traditions in school books are being assailed as sources of extremism that must be dried up."

The author adds: "Religious programs on radio and television are also under attack because these programs, as they claim, drive people backward."

SECULARISTS ACCUSED OF CRUSADE AGAINST ISLAM

Dr. al-Sayyid Rizq al-Tawil writes an approximately 500-word article on the same page saying that secular writers recently waged a fierce attack on Islam "exploiting terrorist incidents to level charges against every Muslim advocating God's cause."

He says that they view religion as a source of threat and regard any sincere religious person as a fundamentalist and terrorist.

FORMER SPEAKER VIEWS APPLICATION OF ISLAMIC SHARI'AH

On page 4 there is an approximately 1,100-word interview with Dr. Sufi Abu-Talib, a former People's Assembly speaker on various issues, such as the implementation of Islamic shari'ah, emergency law, and religious curricula.

In reply to a question, the former speaker says the implementation of the Islamic shari'ah does not constitute any aggression against non-Muslims. Rather, he adds, it primarily guarantees their rights because "Islam depends on two bases; no coercion regarding religion and freedom of faith."

When asked for his view of a solution to the confrontation between the youths and the government, he says political parties and various nongovernmental organizations should embark on a dialogue with the government to persuade the outlaws to change their ideas. He also suggests that school curricula and Islamic religious subjects should be reconsidered and taught in an attractive way.

RELIGIOUS COLLEGE DEAN DEFENDS AL-AZHAR

Dr. Husayn 'Abd-al-Majid, dean of the religious studies college in al-Minufiyah, writes an approximately 700-word article on page 8 defending al-Azhar's standing.

He says al-Azhar will continue to fight and crush "the perverted and deviated movements" and adds that perverted factions are trying hard to encroach on Islam. He notes that these factions include "secularists and Marxists who deny God."

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 3 Jan

NC0801141095

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 3 January edition of the Arabic-language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Scholar Stresses Egypt's Islam Best Example
2. Awqaf Ministry Prepares Religious Convoys for Ramadan

3. Anti-Islam Books Displayed at Cairo University Book Fair
4. Columnist Argues Islam Only Protection of Muslims
5. Writer Says Islam Offers Challenge To Western Civilization
6. Columnist Notes Islam's Role in Chechen Steadfastness
7. Chief Editor Urges Islamic Solidarity To Confront Ordeals

SCHOLAR STRESSES EGYPT'S ISLAM BEST EXAMPLE

In a 200-word report by Mustafa Yasin on page 1, he notes that Dr. Mustafa al-Fiqqi, director of the High Institute For Diplomatic Studies, at a symposium on "The Future Relationship Between the Arab And Western Civilizations" at the American University of Cairo, stresses that "Egypt represents the best example of moderate and tolerant Islam that must be offered as a model Islam to the West." He notes that throughout history Egypt never experienced divisions or fragmentation of the Islamic fabric. He says that Egypt's Islam played an important role in preserving Islam free from religious segregation and fanaticism. Through an elite of thinkers, he says, this model of Islam can play a leading role in serving the Islamic call. He stresses that the extremist groups do not represent Islam but they use it as a cover for their crimes.

AWQAF MINISTRY PREPARES RELIGIOUS CONVOYS FOR RAMADAN

In a 150-word report on page 2, Muhammad al-Abnudi notes Awqaf Minister Muhammmd 'Ali Mahjub's statement that the Awqaf Ministry has completed the final preparations for 17 religious convoys. He says that during the Ramadan month of fasting these convoys, which include 30 scholars in various specializations, will travel through various governorates to enlighten the masses.

ANTI-ISLAM BOOKS DISPLAYED AT CAIRO UNIVERSITY BOOK FAIR

A 120-word report on page 2 says that the General Authority of Books organized a book fair at Cairo University between 25 December and 5 January during which it exhibited many misleading books that assail Islam. Naming the books and their authors, the report says that many of the visiting students expressed indignation that these books which contravene the Islamic culture are exhibited inside the university campus.

COLUMNIST ARGUES ISLAM ONLY PROTECTION OF MUSLIMS

In his 500-world column "With All Frankness" on page 6, Basyuni al-Halawani reviews the attacks on and persecution of Muslims; distortion of Islam; and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, Kashmir, Palestine, and Chechnya. He notes that "neither the United Nations nor the big powers has done anything to stop these abuses of human rights." He stress that true faith in and promotion of the Islamic religion are the only way to "assert the Islamic identity" and preserve it from demise.

SCHOLAR SAYS ISLAM OFFERS CHALLENGE TO WESTERN CIVILIZATION

In his 800-word regular column "Islamic Views," Islamic scholar Dr. Muhammad 'Imarah reviews the Muslims confrontation with the Western challenges throughout history. He argues that despite the West's claims that Islam is a "Christian heresy" and that its civilization is not genuine, this claim "fails to hide the West's fear of Islam and its civilization," or the magnitude of this fear. Historical experience, he argues, made the West view Islam as "a call for revival and liberation" of the east from Western hegemony and exploitation and that the Islamic civilization is the "sole rival" on the international arena to Western civilization. He says that the Islamic civilization has what the Western one lacks and can thus offer itself as an "alternative civilization" rather than a mere "rival."

COLUMNIST NOTES ISLAM'S ROLE IN CHECHEN STEADFASTNESS

In a 300-word column entitled "Chechen Lessons" on page 20, 'Adil Dayf says that the Muslim Chechens have proven a capability to conquer a superpower. They have not panicked by massive weaponry and bombardment but have held onto their land and died for it. He says that the "lesson to be learned from this epic is great and useful to Muslims." He maintains that this example proves that the "greatest power cannot conquer a genuine Islamic creed adopted by a small nation and that Muslims' cohesion and unity are a guarantee for their survival." Perhaps Russian President Yeltsin, he says, will learn this lesson from the Chechens and never try again to conquer any Muslim people. He should have learned a lesson from his Serb allies, who have failed to obliterate the Islamic identity in Bosnia.

CHIEF EDITOR URGES ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY TO CONFRONT ORDEALS

In his 500-word column "A Call to Reason," on the back page, chief editor al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Ra'uf says while the Bosnian people are still bleeding, another wound is opening in the Islamic body in Chechnya. While the Serb aggressors commit their crimes against the Bosnians, backed by Russia, this same big power is doing the same thing in Chechnya. Russia is not only seeking to stifle the Chechen people's desire for independence, but wants this to serve as a lesson for other small Islamic republics eager to gain independence. The Islamic nation is being dealt one blow after another without being able to put up real resistance. While the Caucasus nations look to the Islamic nation to stand by them in their endeavors to determine their future, this nation is unable to do anything. The Islamic countries will not be able to do anything to help these countries unless they put their marginal conflicts aside and translate the slogan of Islamic solidarity into concrete action.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Returns From Cairo, Makes Statement

JN1101170895 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1515 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat returned to the homeland today at the end of a visit to Cairo during which he held talks with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on the latest developments in the peace process in the Middle East.

He said his meeting with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak was successful. He noted that they reviewed developments in the peace process and the implementation of its agreements.

In a statement to journalists upon return, 'Arafat said he discussed with Mubarak the issue of the Israeli occupation forces' redeployment in the occupied West Bank, adding that this was one of the most important topics on the agenda of the meeting with President Mubarak.

Sha'th: Rabin To Present Redeployment Maps

JN1101171695 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1515 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation in the National Authority, has said that during a meeting with President Yasir 'Arafat next week, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin will, for the first time, present maps on the redeployment of Israeli forces in the West Bank.

Sha'th said these maps are not final and are subject to discussion. He ruled out the possibility of reaching any final agreement on the redeployment during the meeting between President 'Arafat and Yitzhaq Rabin.

Al-Husayni, Hamas Spokesman Comment on Elections

NC1101135595 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 7 Jan 95 p 13

[Report by Maha Samarah in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jordan is the country nearest to Palestine, and hardly a day passes without Amman hosting Palestinian leaders. They come to exchange views or bring messages, and some of them use Amman as a temporary headquarters or a path to the occupied Palestinian territories.

In two interviews with Faysal al-Husayni, chairman of the Orient House in Jerusalem, and Muhammad Nazzal, representative of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in Jordan, we tried to shed some light on what is happening inside the Palestinian Authority [PA] and the power struggle in the self-rule areas. [passage omitted]

Faysal al-Husayni said Palestinian elections are important for two reasons: They will speed up the Israeli withdrawal, and they attest to Palestinian democracy.

He expects the results of the elections to be in favor of the Palestinian Authority. He stresses that "if the elections were held now, the majority would vote for Fatah and for PA supporters." However, he added: "Of course Hamas will have some weight, but it will not win a majority."

Asked if there would be any surprises if the election results are contrary to expectations, al-Husayni said: "Well, that would be a reality that we would have to live with." [passage omitted]

Asked if Hamas intends to launch operations against Israel from Jordan, Nazzal said: "No, Hamas has no organizational presence in Jordan or in any other Arab country. Our presence abroad is limited to political and media offices. Our focus and military presence is inside the occupied Palestinian territory."

Regarding the balance of power in the struggle between Hamas and the PLO in Gaza and Jericho, Nazzal said: "This balance is tipping in favor of Hamas, because the popularity of the PA is being gradually eroded, while the popularity of Hamas is gradually growing."

On Hamas' participation in the self-rule elections, Nazzal said: "So far, the nature and terms of the elections are not clear. We have many doubts about the ability to hold them. Our final decision will depend on the nature and terms of the elections."

He added: "The problem of these elections is that they will most likely be for an executive council that will have the occupation authority as its term of reference. Hamas, therefore, will not participate." [passage omitted]

Qaddumi Cites Problems in Peace Process

NC1101160795 Paris AFP in English 1400 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, Jan 11 (AFP)—Faruq Qaddumi, who is in charge of the Palestine Liberation Organization's foreign affairs, said just before leaving here for Damascus that "serious problems" were hampering the peace process with Israel.

He told AFP the problems involved continuing Israeli settlements on the West Bank, new problems with Palestinian institutions and upcoming general elections.

"These are serious threats that require more efforts by the co-sponsors" of the peace talks, the United States and Russia, he said.

Qaddumi took advantage of a missed connection here to meet with the Greek Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias, who himself had just returned from visits to Syria and Jordan.

Qaddumi said "Greece is doing its best to help us," he said before leaving for a meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

Minister on PA Financial Situation, Funding Received

NC1201113095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0950 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, 12 Jan (MENA)—Zuhdi al-Nashashibi, minister of finance in the Palestinian National Authority [PA], has stated that they will soon finish preparing the drafts of the financial, banking, and corporate laws for the PA areas. He pointed out that the Palestinian financial institutions were established recently.

He said in an interview with MENA today that some tangible progress has been made in establishing financial institutions belonging to the PA. Many qualified people have been recruited, and the Finance Ministry's structure has been improved so it is now able to shoulder its responsibilities.

He added that agreement has been reached with the IMF and the World Bank delegation that is currently visiting Gaza to appoint four ranking international experts who will offer the necessary technical aid to boost the ministry's performance.

Mr. al-Nashashibi said: We are currently preparing a temporary budget for the period ending 31 March. During the coming two months we will prepare the budget for the remainder of the current year.

He added: We have started reaping revenue from the West Bank; however, this revenue does not cover expenses. There are 18,000 employees working in the fields of education, teaching, health, social services, taxes, culture, and tourism who are on the PA payroll.

He said: We are still in a tight spot regarding the increasing expenditures the PA is shouldering as a result of the expanded services. He noted that the donor countries have so far not offered the necessary support to meet the increasing expenses.

He pointed out that Israel was reluctant to transfer to the PA the taxes it collected before the PA got the taxation right last month. What has been transferred so far is much less than what was collected from the Palestinian citizens.

He said that the PA has not gotten any support from the Arab countries except for what the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia transfers in the form of taxes imposed on the Palestinians working there and the contributions of some Saudi brothers.

The PA received $3.5 million a month and a half ago deriving from the taxes imposed on the Palestinians there.

Fatah Said To Prepare for IDF Redeployment

TA1101185895 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 11 Jan 95

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Marwan al-Barghuthi, Fatah secretary in the West Bank, has said that Fatah officials have received orders from the Palestinian Authority to prepare for the assumption of power after the Israeli Defense Forces [IDF] redeploy. In a statement to our correspondent Kayid Zahir, Mr. al-Barghuthi added that Fatah's meetings next week will be devoted to making arrangements for this and drawing up a plan for implementing the next stage of the Oslo agreement. He believes that the talks held in recent days between the Palestinian and Israeli sides made considerable progress toward this end.

Gaza Security Chief Interviewed on Bus Incident

JN1101144495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1030 GMT 11 Jan 95

[Interview with Muhammad Dahlan, head of Palestinian Preventive Security in the Gaza Strip, by Hasan Abu-Zayid on 11 January; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-Zayid] Mr. Muhammad Dahlan, official in charge of preventive security in the Gaza Strip, briefly what happened at Netzarim junction yesterday?

[Dahlan] What happened was the result of a violation of the Cairo Agreement. I was heading to the southern area, and since the road leading to Highway No. 4 from Netzarim is closed to Palestinians, we took the eastern road that leads to Netzarim. As we were travelling along that road, we saw large number of Arab cars that were not allowed to pass freely. My driver moved to inspect the matter, and I saw an Israeli military vehicle escorting a bus travelling along that road. Suddenly, a Israeli soldier brandished his weapon, indicating that we should stop and not overtake the Israeli military vehicle. This was in violation of the agreement. I waited until we reached the Netzarim main junction to get to the Israeli-Palestinian joint patrol to brief them on the incident. A quarrel ensued between one of my escorts and one of the Israeli soldiers escorting the bus. The matter was resolved later. I informed the joint patrol that this was a violation of the agreement and should not be exercised because this will agitate the Palestinian people against the Palestinian Authority and against the Israeli Army, and we do not want that. We are interested in reaching understanding between us.

[Abu-Zayid] The Israelis say the Palestinian cars and the civilian and military officials of the Palestinian Authority are not allowed to travel on this road.

[Dahlan] According to the agreement, the Israeli Army is not allowed to prevent Palestinian civilian or military vehicles from entering these roads. We have the right to travel along all Palestinian roads inside the areas of the Palestinian Authority. However, armed men are not allowed to enter the transverse roads that lead to the settlements, such as inside the area of Netzarim or inside the area of Gush Qatif. That is all. However, the Israelis are not allowed to travel along several roads inside the area of the Palestinian Authority. But they trespass and they travel along these roads frequently.

Hamas Denies Link With Document 'Leaked' by PA

MM1101142295 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 11 Jan 95 p2

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Hamas has categorically denied any connection with what it called the "fabricated document" leaked by Yasir 'Arafat's authorities in Gaza under the title "a program of internal popular confrontations" alleged to have been issued by Hamas in a circular to its members as a plan to foil the autonomy in Gaza and Jericho. Hamas official spokesman Engineer Ibrahim Ghawshah, commenting on this, said that "Hamas affirms that it has nothing whatsoever to do with that document. It should particularly be noted that 'Arafat's group has been in the habit of leaking such forged documents in the name of Hamas, especially on the movement's relations with Tehran, with the aim of undermining its reputation and image."

Ghawshah added: "I want to emphasize that we have nothing to do with that document which, to say the least, is a plant against us."

Algeria

Reportage on Leaders' Talks in Rome Continues

FFS: No 'Internationalized' Solutions

MM1101124595 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Jan 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Qusayy Salih al-Darwish: "Ait Ahmed Stresses to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT His Opposition to Internationalized Solution. Rome Meeting Shifts to Secrecy"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Rome—The second Rome meeting on Algeria has begun in some secret location away from the press, which was largely present at the first meeting despite the fact that it had not been officially announced. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, Socialist Forces Front [FFS] leader Hocine Ait Ahmed has emphasized that the internationalization of the Algerian crisis has become a reality because violence and the fear of violence have extended beyond the Algerian borders. In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Ait Ahmed said that it must be pointed out that "we reject internationalized solutions. It is up to the Algerians, and only the Algerians, to find the ways and means to stop this bloodletting as soon as possible. There is no solution other than the peaceful and democratic solution. The purpose of our second meeting in Rome, sponsored by the Sant'Egidio Group, is to define the terms, the framework, and the makers of a solution that will end the crisis." The FFS leader added that the continuation of the eradicationist policy would only enhance divisions and aggravate the situation. "My feeling is that the participants in this new meeting are now more responsible and mature because they feel the people's pain. That is why it seems to me that a reconciliatory democratic agreement is not only possible but achievable in the short term. We should mobilize the support of Algerian public opinion for such an agreement, as well as the support of world public opinion and of Algeria's international partners so that the Algerian regime agrees to enter into a serious and effective dialogue and agrees to a democratic transitional period." [passage omitted]

Asked if the Rome meeting might result in a front or alliance of opposition parties, he replied: "We have no intention of forming a front against the regime, just as, over the past three years, we firmly refused to join a front the regime wanted to set up against the armed groups. The history of the Algerian people's struggle is full of experiments. What is important is getting the dialogue started by mobilizing internal and external public opinion. That is the purpose of our meeting today, to make the Algerian regime hold serious and credible negotiations and aim for the joint management of the transitional period. That is the only strategic line. It requires patience, persistence, the ability to convince, and insistence on the people's peaceful option. We would not be content with just reconciliatory, responsible, and practical proposals. We want to mobilize the efforts of all the participants to the maximum in order to reduce the level and degree of violence through a gradual, progressive, and continuing commitment."

In reply to a question about the significant positive development in the attitude of the [Islamic] Salvation [Front] leaderships, he said: I have indeed got that report and we have received it with satisfaction, which is not strange because any citizen who symathizes spiritually with the suffering and plight of the people is bound to move in the direction of the sound course, especially if he has a direct political responsibility. [passage omitted]

Platform To Condemn Violence

LD1101174795 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In Rome, the talks between several Algerian political leaders, including Islamist leaders, under the auspices of the Sant'Egidio Catholic community, are entering their third day. The outlines of the platform or the national contract, as it is being called, which they are preparing, are beginning to become clear. Jerome Bastion reports:

[Bastion] The Algerian roundtable session, now extended to involve the two representatives of the Islamic al-Nahdah Party, including its president, Mr. Djaballah, has, for now, concluded consultations on the central question of violence. In the name of all the participants, and thus in the name of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], the spokesman revealed that the platform, which may perhaps be called the National Contract, will contain a formal condemnation of acts of violence, whoever perpetrates them, whether they are targeted at young Algerians presumed to be supporters of the Islamists, or whether they are targeted at policemen, journalists, intellectuals, women, and civilians. It is a very significant denunciation, striking out at abuses committed by the state, terrorism, and the destruction of the national heritage, which nevertheless, makes allowances for political violence of a kind not specifically defined. In any case, explained Mr. Ali Yahia spokesman for the participants, we are calling for the setting up of an independent investigatory committee that alone can decide on the legal framework for dealing with the many murders of doubtful origin in Algeria.

The Rome Agreement, expected tomorrow evening, could also propose a cease-fire, the conditions for which are not yet known. Finally, two wishes have been expressed here: That the government should present one consistent position, and that, as a measure of conciliation, the FIS officials inside and outside the country should be allowed to meet freely, which could only make this party's position more coherent. Jerome Bastion, reporting from Rome for RFI.

Ali Yahia: Hope Given

LD1101182095 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 1700 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] An attack on a bus carrying civilians in Algeria left 11 people dead and six injured yesterday. This happened in Batna in the east of the country, while at the same time, in Rome the main parties opposed to the Algerian authorities were adopting a common platform, calling for dialogue.

Abdennour Ali Yahia, the chairman of the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights and spokesman for the Rome working group, told Emmanuel Delattre of the hope given by this step, even if for the moment the Algerian authorities have roundly condemned it.

[Begin recording] [Yahia] We want the transitional period to be a democratic transition. This must happen, with the agreement of the authorities, and with the agreement of the representative parties to prepare the main things: Apart from the administration of current affairs, this is to move toward the people so that they can express their views by means of free elections for their future leaders, who would then be legal and legitimate.

[Delattre] So, for the first time the Algerian opposition as a whole has signed a document. Do you think you have any chance of the authorities accepting it to some extent?

[Yahia] That is true. We are saying that they are de facto authorities, but we have to take them into account. We, as we leave here, we are going to touch the Algerian people. We are going to try to hold either a national conference, or a congress there, to bring in the maximum possible number of Algerians.

If the authorities stick to their position, we will adopt a parallel position. I think that ordinary geometry says that parallels never meet. But we must make them meet, by means of a bridge, at a moment when everyone is ready for dialogue. [end recording]

State To Eliminate 'Terrorism'

LD1101204795 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In a briefing with the foreign press covering the Sant'Egidio meeting, the Algerian ambassador to Italy first reaffirmed the position of the presidency of the state, in other words: Yes to dialogue among Algerians and no to any interference in Algeria's internal affairs. The Algerian state will assume all its responsibilities to preserve national sovereignty and independence, will endeavor to restore order and stability, and will support a real democracy through which the Algerian people will be the only one to decide its fate.

The statement by the presidency of state added: Algeria's ambassador to Italy, Mr. Benzaghou, also mentioned the measures of clemency taken by the state in favor of all those who renounced violence and who did not commit any crimes.

Algeria's ambassador asked the press the following question: What have we noticed since the first Rome meeting? We are still witnessing the assassination of journalists. The armed groups have claimed responsibility for these assassinations, which are aimed at silencing journalists for good.

The Algerian state, Mr. Benzaghou said, is determined to eliminate this phenomenon and is even more determined to stop the bloodshed because this blood is still being spilt and it is Algerian blood and the blood of our children.

The Algerian ambassador to Italy concluded his news conference by saying that Algeria was still standing with its institutions and social organizations and that the state of Algeria would stand fast against all attempted foreign interference in its internal affairs.

Armed Attack Reported on 2 Foreign Priests

LD1101184495 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 1800 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There has been another attack on White Fathers in Algeria, but this time the two priests, one French and one Swiss, escaped unhurt from the attack on their mission in Ghardaia on the edge of the Sahara. An armed group attacked them after evening mass. The doors of the house were locked and the two White Fathers managed to escape via the terrace. This happened on 8 January, but has only been learned now. [passage omitted]

Batna Company Bus Attacked; 12 Killed

LD1101174395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1700 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] After yesterdays killing in Barika of four worshipers who were leaving the town mosque, Batna is mourning more victims of terrorism. This time, a bus carrying company [not further identified] workers was attacked by terrorists. The security services report that 12 people were killed and five others wounded in this attack.

Elsewhere, in the fight against terrorism, the security services announced that they have killed six members of a terrorist group, including the amir of M'sila Province. The security forces carried out the operation after receiving information from members of the public.

Egypt

Mubarak Addresses Writers on Various Issues

NC1101193995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1745 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 11 Jan (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has affirmed that several values and principles govern national performance in Egypt, foremost of which is that citizens are equal before the law. He said there is not a single person detained in Egypt because of his political ideas.

In his dialogue with writers and intellectuals today, President Mubarak said no book will be confiscated and no intellectual production will be impounded without a court ruling, adding that the government abides by the ruling of the courts.

This was stated by Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif following President Mubarak's three-hour meeting with writers and intellectuals at the Cairo International Book Fair today. Al-Sharif added that President Mubarak affirmed during the meeting that all aid given to Egypt is strictly controlled and supervised by the donor states and Egypt. Furthermore, all aid, grants, and loans are earmarked for specific projects and cannot be used otherwise. President Mubarak noted that the loans received by Egypt are not used to cover the budget deficit but for construction and development projects. If they are used to buy basic commodities such as wheat and sugar, they are loans that were specially concluded for this purpose. President Mubarak explained that the aid that Egypt has received for the flood disaster does not exceed 60 million pounds, representing 10 percent of the amount to be shouldered by the Egyptian Government. All this aid will be spent on repairing the damage caused by the flood and paying compensation to stricken families.

Regarding foreign policy, Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said President Mubarak affirmed that Egypt's foreign policy is not extemporaneous. President Mubarak explained that the Alexandria summit results strengthened the Arab League, created a nucleus for economic cooperation, and opened the door to Arab reconciliation. He added that Arab reconciliation needs time and preparation before it can be achieved. He affirmed that Arab reconciliation is not impossible but needs time, good preparation, and psychological readiness. He said Egypt will continue its efforts to clear the Arab atmosphere. President Mubarak affirmed that Egypt is a pivotal country and continues to play its role. Throughout history Egypt has played this pivotal role in peace and war. He explained that peace has its requirements and that Egypt is able to develop peace in the region and to maintain it.

In his meeting with writers and intellectuals, President Mubarak dealt with various issues, including the peace issue. He affirmed that maintaining peace after achieving it on all tracks will become harder and more difficult than the peace process itself.

Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said that President Mubarak again warned against the slowness in extending support for the Palestinian Authority. He indicated that the peace process on the Palestinian land and the achievement of peace for the Palestinian people are the crux of the Middle East issue.

On Egypt's admission to the Arab Maghreb Union [AMU], President Mubarak said Egypt asked to join the AMU only as an observer and that it has its own viewpoint on this subject.

President Mubarak affirmed that the Nile waters are a matter of life or death for Egypt. He said we have our own way of safeguarding water resources.

During his meeting with the writers and intellectuals, President Mubarak dealt with the parliamentary life in Egypt. He affirmed that there must be a majority party in Egypt capable of forming a government and achieving political and legislative stability. President Mubarak said that his chairmanship of the National Democratic Party is not a new idea; there are major states whose presidents are also party leaders.

President Mubarak hailed the government of Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi for its economic reform achievements and implementing the development plans. He urged the government to break monopolies, ease bottlenecks, and keep the consumer societies outside the privatization plans.

President Mubarak stressed that the government is working to control prices and achieve a balance between wages and prices within a reform policy. However, some merchants exploit certain situations. Moreover, sometimes there are sudden increases in the prices of commodities in world markets.

The information minister said writer Lutfi al-Khuli inquired about writer 'Adil Husayn's case. Al-Khuli said that although he radically disagrees with Husayn, he wonders whether Husayn was taken political prisoner because of his positions and views or whether he is being detained within the framework of the law. He also wanted to know the truth about Husayn's situation and treatment in prison.

President Mubarak explained that he learned about this subject when he read the newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH the day after the arrest. He said the case of the aforementioned journalist is now before the Public Prosecution, and that he is treated like any other citizen. It is a matter of principle that there should be no intervention in the work of the judiciary, he said.

President Mubarak added: I was eager to know the truth about the matter, and the answer I got was that Husayn was not detained but remanded on the orders of the Public Prosecution. We do not want to go into details on this subject; the matter is in the hands of the judiciary, which will make a just decision. We should keep our hands off any case being examined by the judiciary, and the executive authority has no option but to implement the rulings of the judiciary.

The information minister said that the president then asked Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi to comment on the questions regarding writer 'Adil Husayn. The interior minister explained that no arrest decision was made against the writer and that he is not being questioned for his writings or views.

He said Husayn was summoned for questioning by the Public Prosecution, which decided that he be remanded. He explained that the Interior Ministry and the police and security services have nothing to do whatsoever with the interrogation or the remand order.

About some newspaper reports that Husayn is being mistreated, the interior minister said: All these reports are lies and slander; there was no mistreatment. 'Adil Husayn's activities in prison and the visitors he receives prove that all such reports are lies. 'Adil Husayn accepts all the food and medicine he receives with thanks.

The interior minister said: I do not know where those people got this false information, through which they only seek to distort the decisions of the Public Prosecution. He said he has evidence to prove that 'Adil Husayn is being treated well in his precautionary detention, and he expressed readiness to hold an inquiry into any mistake made against any citizen inside or outside prisons. Minister al-Alfi also expressed readiness to visit the prison to check on the situation.

Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said President Mubarak explained in an answer to a question on how Egypt uses and invests the aid it receives from the United States and other international loans and grants that the U.S. and other aid is not repaid in cash, and is used to fund specific projects in accordance with feasibility studies.

The president said that the aid agreement with the United States stipulates that Egypt shall buy the goods and equipment needed for projects from the United States itself, and that this is done in accordance with contracts and agreements that are revised with extreme accuracy by the donor states and Egyptian watchdog agencies.

He said cash assistance is also extended on condition that it be used to fund projects or to buy certain commodities from the donor countries themselves.

The president gave some examples on grants provided to Egypt. He cited a grant from a European country to buy train equipment. The European country was suffering from a recession and accumulation of products in a factory for train equipment. The president explained that the donor states also consider their own interests and the promotion of their products.

Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said that President Mubarak explained that every loan is in accordance with an agreement submitted to the People's Assembly. These agreements specify the repayment period and other conditions. He affirmed that the loans received or contracted by Egypt are not used to cover the budget deficit but for investment projects or to buy basic commodities, such as wheat and sugar.

On the contributions to the flood-stricken areas, President Mubarak explained that the total amount of contributions received from individuals and states does not exceed 60 million pounds, representing only 10 percent of the amount to be shouldered by the government for paying compensations and rebuilding damaged villages. He noted that there are checks and controls to ensure that the contributions are spent on the disaster-stricken areas.

President Mubarak explained that U.S. military aid is not given in cash but through a plan by the Egyptian Armed Forces which defines their requirements for military equipment from U.S. military factories. The U.S. side pays directly to the U.S. factories, which produce this military equipment. He added that there is no state that offers loans to import services and equipment from a third country. Most of the aid is not offered in cash but in the form of infrastructure projects.

President Mubarak asked Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri, deputy prime minister and minister of planning, to elaborate on this subject. Al-Janzuri explained that Egypt has spent 123 billion pounds from loans on infrastructure building. What has taken place in this sphere is a source of pride for every Egyptian.

Dr. al-Janzuri said there are presently in Egypt over 3 million telephone lines. The capacity of Egyptian ports has increased from 15 million tons annually to 48 million tons. Whereas we used to pay $100 million annually in fines for delays in unloading, we are now earning money for the quick unloading of ships ahead of schedule. Progress has also been made in the field of electricity and roads.

Dr. al-Janzuri said that thanks to Egypt's stance on the Gulf war, 50 percent of Egypt's debts, equivalent to 80 billion pounds, have been canceled. In other words, it is as if the infrastructure building in Egypt had taken place free of charge.

On the safeguarding of Egyptian intellectual property rights and GATT's reference to this issue, Dr. al-Janzuri explained that this issue is new to GATT. We in Egypt are suffering from the theft of our intellectual, artistic, and cultural works. GATT's reference to this issue will serve to protect the Egyptian intellectual property rights. [passage omitted]

On Arab-Israeli relations, Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said that President Mubarak explained that we must have confidence in ourselves and in our capabilities as we pursue the path of peace. We must not have wrong images about the consequences of peace. President Mubarak said it is wrong to imagine that Israel is capable of swallowing the Arab world with all its resources and capabilities. It is also wrong to believe that Egypt's role will be marginalized after peace is achieved. These ideas are being circulated by some research centers so that the public will believe them. [passage omitted]

President Mubarak explained that the financial resources that the Palestinians need will solve the infrastructure problems in the Palestinian territories and create work opportunities for the Palestinians. He said he has asked the European Union and the donor countries that are asking about the fate of this aid to carry out feasibility studies for the projects and that their companies implement these projects. He warned against the collapse of the Palestinian track in the peace process, affirming that its collapse will mean the collapse of the whole peace process. He noted that good progress has been made in this field. Meetings have been held between Palestinians and Israelis and between Palestinians and officials from the donor countries to achieve progress in this field. He affirmed that Egypt will continue its efforts in this regard. [passage omitted]

Mubarak Comments on Rabin's 'War' Remarks

NC1101161995 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 11 Jan 95

[News conference by President Husni Mubarak with unidentified correspondents at the International Book Fair in Cairo on 11 January—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mubarak] [The book fair] is always held in January. It is an opportunity for us to meet with writers, intellectuals, and others and to answer their questions, even if they are simple questions. Through them and television we will explain some issues to the citizens, even if they are small issues.

[Correspondent] The fair will have a number of seminars and dialogues this year under the title "Exploring the Horizons of the Future and the 21st Century." What is your view of the future of culture in Egypt?

[Mubarak] Attend these seminars. If there is anything new and good proposed in the public interest, we will adopt it.

[Correspondent] After meeting with U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry two days ago, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin spoke about the need for Israel to prepare for an all-out war in the region in the near future.

[Mubarak] It is regrettable that I should hear this from the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Rabin himself. We are seeking peace. Hinting at war is a very serious matter. This is what is scaring us; when we say we will sign a nuclear agreement, the public will ask me where I am going. If we are searching for peace, we must enter into peace and speak about peace in all its components. We seek peace. But when we hear such statements, they scare the states that want to join peace agreements. I very much regret that I should hear such statements.

[Correspondent] Regarding the renewal of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, you have been a pioneer on this subject through your initiative on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East. Israel continues to insist on not signing the treaty. Is there anything new?

[Mubarak] Not at all. I have called for declaring the Middle East a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical, and biological. If we are going to sign—we are all in one region and are all involved in the peace process—we must all sign. But if I sign and he [Rabin] does not, it will be difficult for me to accept this as a citizen because the public will ask me why I signed. There must be strong justification to present to the public or it will be chaos.

Rabin's 'Hint' at Force 'Unacceptable'

MM1101170095 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Jan 95 p 5

[Report by Ashraf al-Faqiyy: "Cairo Criticizes Rabin Statement on Israeli Readiness To Wage All-Out War"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo—Cairo has vehemently criticized Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's statements, considering them a hint at the use of force and a return to the pre-peace period.

Rabin had announced that Israel is prepared "to wage an all-out war in the medium or long term."

An Egyptian diplomatic source has told AL-HAYAH: Hinting at force is unacceptable, and declaring other wars conflicts with the peace move chosen voluntarily by Israel to achieve stability in the region.

The source added: If Israel is frightened by surface-to-surface missiles, as Rabin said, it should hasten to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and to subject its nuclear installations to inspection by the international agency.

The source pointed out that Egypt has also called for a gradual reduction of conventional weapons after agreeing on freeing the Middle East from all kinds of mass-destruction weapons. The source said: "The lack of military balance in the region will lead to no real peace in the region." The source pointed out that $600-million increase in the Isaeli Defense Ministry's budget "is tantamount to an invitation for resuming the arms race in the region."

Press Denounces Israeli 'Despotism'

NC1101162095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2200 GMT 10 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Jan (MENA)—Egyptian papers coming out Wednesday, 11 January, concur that Israeli despotism stands as a stumbling block in the way of the regional peace process. They refer in this context to Israel's procrastination in implementing the self-rule agreement it signed with the Palestinians in Washington in September 1993. They refer also to Israel's endeavor to possess a massive number of mass destruction weapons, as well as its insistence that peace must go in accordance with its own will and pursue its interests, without any consideration whatsoever for the interests of the other parties.

Editorials in the three morning papers address this issue. AL- AKHBAR states that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has apparently not made up his mind about the issue of war or peace with the Arab world in general, or with individual states. In both cases, the paper says, Rabin insists on a peace in his own fashion, so that he can continue to hold all the strings and control their movements. He is also very careful to keep a heavy stick, or so he thinks, so that he can use it whenever he fancies that he can get what he wants by just waving it.

The paper cautions that Israel wants a fragile peace in which it controls all the strings and thus secures for itself the largest piece of the Palestinian territories. These lands are still suffering under the yoke of occupation. Due to Israeli obstructive measures, these lands are being liberated at a slow rate, indicating that this state of affairs will persist for God knows how many more years, the paper says.

AL-AKHBAR adds that this situation leads to a question: Will the Palestinian territories be cleared of the mines and time bombs planted in them under the name "Jewish settlements," or will these settlements be expanded as current developments indicate?

AL-JUMHURIYAH comments on Yitzhaq Rabin's recent remark that Israel must be ready for an all-out war. The paper says that this casts doubts on Israel's sincerity in seeking a real, objective peace with Arabs, particularly since U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry affirmed during a visit to Israel yesterday that his country is committed to guaranteeing Israel's security and its qualitative military supremacy.

The paper denounces the Israeli stance, adding that Israel is beating the drums of war instead of demonstrating its goodwill by signing the treaty on eliminating weapons of mass destruction.

AL-JUMHURIYAH states that the battle for peace is hard in view of the Israeli conduct. It refers in this context to Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa's statement to the Consultative Council yesterday, in which he said that Israel is looking for excuses to postpone legislative elections in the occupied territories. Musa further said that Israel is hesitating in honoring its commitments and that it is confiscating Palestinian lands.

AL-AHRAM cites Musa's assertion that Egypt will not show tolerance toward these serious challenges which undermine the Arab existence and the nation's future, particularly when Israel seeks to possess a huge nuclear arsenal and deliberately tries to delay a peace agreement with Syria.

The paper says that as usual, Egypt will always be a pioneer when it comes to defying the challenges facing Arabs. With its brothers, it will do its utmost to eliminate the new challenges and will sincerely work to restore Arab solidarity, which is the first step on the confrontation road, the paper says.

Israeli Publishers Banned From Cairo Book Fair

TA1101121495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Egypt has again blocked Israeli participation in the international book fair that opened today in Cairo. Israeli publishers who applied to take part in the prestigious event were turned away.

While Israel did take part in the fair in the early 1980's, for the past eight years, Egypt has barred its presence there, citing security reasons.

Iraq Reportedly Invited to Book Fair

NC1101131395 Paris AFP in English 2351 GMT 10 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan 11 (AFP)—Iraq has received an invitation, for the first time since 1990, to the Cairo Book Fair due to open here on Wednesday [11 January], Iraqi diplomatic sources said here.

"An invitation to attend was sent to Iraq by the general book authority but due to the embargo imposed (by the United Nations) Iraq's participation will be only symbolic," the sources said.

"It is the first time an invitation has been addressed to Iraq" to take part in the Cairo Book Fair since the Gulf crisis of August 1990 to February 1991, they said, noting that neither Israel nor Iran had been invited to attend.

In recent months Iraq had received invitations to several other cultural events in Cairo, the diplomats said.

Israel will not take part in the book fair for the ninth consecutive year. Egypt is apparently not keen to expand its relations with Israel with which its relations are confined strictly to economic exchanges.

Relations with Iran were broken off after the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 and Cairo has latterly accused Tehran of supporting armed Islamic militants fighting to overthrow Egypt's secular regime.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak will inaugurate the 27th Cairo Book Fair on Wednesday morning. The fair will last two weeks.

Samir Sarhan the president of the book authority said more than 3,300 publishing houses from 76 countries would present "19 million titles and 54 million books".

Al-Baz on Alexandria Summit, U.S. Relations

NC1101153495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1300 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Jan (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has stated that the Alexandria summit between Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz was designed to strengthen Arab solidarity and coordination.

In an interview to be published in the 13 January issue of the weekly magazine AL-MUSAWWAR, al-Baz said the summit was not directed against anyone and did not aim to form an axis or to impose certain policies on other Arab countries in their absence because this would be an infringement on their rights. He indicated that it is difficult to hold an Arab summit at present in view of Iraq's stance on the second Gulf war and because several Arab states object to a summit in which Iraq participates before it fulfills certain demands. He explained that Iraq's recognition of Kuwait's independence and its borders is a positive step in the right direction. Iraq must adopt further measure so that it can again become an effective member of the Arab family.

Al-Baz stressed that Egypt wants to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people and then to return Iraq to the Arab family because it is inconceivable that Iraq will remain forever outside the Arab community. He said that for this to be done, Iraq must fulfill and implement the requirements and conditions of the Gulf states. He indicated that Iraq in itself is not a threat to any Arab state but certain Iraqi policies are threatening. He added that the Alexandria summit focused on the rehabilitation of Iraq in the Arab family if it continues to take positive steps in regard to Kuwaiti prisoners, proves that its policies no longer pose a threat, and ceases to threaten to use force.

Al-Baz explained that the summit did not ask Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid to undertake any mission, because three states cannot tell the secretary general what is required from the Arab League.

Asked about U.S. media claims that Egypt is violating the international sanctions against Libya, al-Baz stressed that it is not violating the UN resolutions. He called on anyone who can prove the opposite to submit an official complaint to the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee. He affirmed that Egypt is not afraid of anyone, "whoever it may be, America or anyone else."

Asked whether the issue of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty has had a negative effect on Egyptian-U.S. relations, al-Baz said this is illogical because submitting viewpoints on various issues is acceptable and common practice. He indicated that the Americans have not tried to put pressure on Egypt on this matter. He affirmed that Egypt's decision is dictated by the national interest, especially in regard to national security. No step will be taken that might endanger national security.

Al-Baz said that some U.S. media quarters are trying to mar relations between the two countries. He added that during his visit to the United States he noticed that U.S. officials have nothing to do with this campaign and that they disapprove of any attack on Egypt and any attempt to cast doubt on its role.

Al-Baz said it is unlikely that the success of the Republicans in the U.S. elections will have any effect on relations with Egypt. He said the U.S. Administration is serious in its cooperation with Egypt.

Al-Baz stressed that Egypt's relations with Sudan are strategic and not tactical. He indicated that Egypt did not prevent or curb the activity of any Sudanese in Egypt, despite the practices of the Sudanese regime.

On the peace process in the Middle East, al-Baz said Syria is prepared to continue to negotiate on the basis of the UN resolutions. He affirmed that it is in Israel's interest to create a permanent and durable peace because the belief that what is good for the Arabs is bad for Israel is an idea that belongs to the era of war and not the era of peace.

Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah Now Based in Mallawi

NC1101123195 Paris AFP in English 0310 GMT 11 Jan 95

[Report by Hassan Mekki]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mallawi, Egypt, Jan 11 (AFP)—Moslem militants chased out of the Asyut province in southern Egypt have found a new base here only slightly further north and entrenched themselves defying a major police crackdown.

"The al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah (Islamic Group) has decided to establish its new theatre of operations in Mallawi because it has thousands of sympathisers in the region," said Ahmad 'Abd-al-Malak, a local official from the Egyptian Organisation of Human Rights (EOHR).

They have succeeded in winning local backing by providing social and financial help in this town in the al-Minya province, 300 kilometres (185 miles) south of the capital, where half the workforce is unemployed, he said.

'Abd-al-Malak estimated there were 200 to 300 militants in the region carrying out military-style operations.

"Three-quarters of al-Jama'ah activists have been killed or arrested since last summer but the al-Jama'ah keeps its informers and its sources of finances," said an Islamic sympathiser who refused to be named.

He said he used to attend group meetings regularly in Mallawi's mosques until last June.

Since then, this commercial town of 200,000 has been the scene of constant bloodshed, and a curfew was slapped on the residents in October.

The fundamentalists regrouped here to escape a security clampdown in their former stronghold of Asyut 100 kilometres (60 miles) further south. Sugar cane fields provide handy shelter and many apparently have hideouts in Mallawi or neighbouring villages.

On January 2 al-Jama'ah mounted four virtually simultaneous attacks around Mallawi, killing eight police and three civilians, according to official figures. It was one of the bloodiest days in the country since militants launched their anti-government campaign in March 1992.

Al-Jama'ah said it had killed 15 police, "in revenge for crimes against the Egyptian people."

At least eight militants have been shot dead by security forces in police operations in southern Egypt and on the outskirts of Cairo on Sunday and Monday.

Al-Jama'ah sympathiser said the militants were "like genies who appear suddenly to mount an attack, then disappear in the twinkling of an eye to nobody knows where."

He said although police had managed to infiltrate the group in some places, the militants had also found informers in the security services in recent months which kept them informed of police movements.

He said he knew of one plainclothes policeman who for 500 Egyptian pounds (about 150 dollars) informed militants of the whereabouts of two officers who were killed last month.

"Since then the policeman has disappeared," he added.

He added the group got funding from abroad "since it has supporters everywhere," and also enjoyed major financial and political backing from several supporters within Egypt.

But he denied a report in the opposition weekly paper AL-AHALI that the fundamentalists had threatened to kill rich people if they refused to hand over money.

What sometimes happened was that threatening letters were sent to police or those who had "collaborated" with the authorities, containing the warning, "Get your coffin ready", and 40 or 50 pounds (10 to 20 dollars) bribe, he said.

"No one dares to tell the police about the presence of an al-Jama'ah militant for fear of revenge, and also through fear of being badly treated by the police," said 'Abd-al-Malak.

But he added people were also fed up with police repressive measures and that helped the militants.

The sympathiser said the militants could change tactics and move elsewhere to escape police pressure, but added "they are ready to die at any time, while the police are all the time afraid of dying".

A total of 576 people have been killed since militants launched their campaign including 21 who have died since the start of this year.

Al-Jama'ah Suspected in Killing of Policeman

NC1101215295 Paris AFP in English 2117 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] al-Minya, Egypt, Jan 11 (AFP)—Suspected Islamic militants killed a policeman in front of his family at their home in southern Egypt on Wednesday, police said.

They said the assailants fired the moment Rif'at Kamal Jabir opened the door of his apartment in the village of Naway, in al-Minya province.

His killers, believed to be members of the underground al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah, escaped, police said.

Earlier the same day, the military chief of al-Jama'ah for the Mallawi region, 30-year-old Mahmud 'Abd-al-Mahmud, committed suicide rather than face arrest, according to police.

Islamic militants also killed a trader and his eight-year-old son in a village near Mallawi, police said.

Mufti, Anglican Head Touring U.S.

NC1201071295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0607 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 12 Jan (MENA)—His Eminence Shaykh Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, the Mufti of Egypt, has stated that the objective of his current visit to the United States—on which he is accompanied by Dr. Samu'il Habib, the spiritual leader of the Anglican community in Egypt—is to confirm the spirit of love, friendship, and peace that has linked the Muslim and Christian people in Egypt ever since time immemorial.

He said that another objective of the visit is to rectify the image of Islam currently dominant in the United States and the West in general, due to the fact that some lost groups have resorted to terrorism, which is not approved by any divine religion. Religious doctrine requires service to mankind, not attacks on it.

Mufti Tantawi and Dr. Habib are expected to hold a news conference in the U.S. capital to address these issues and clarify the facts for American public opinion and the media.

Dr. Tantawi and Dr. Habib began their visit to the United States on 3 January and will go on until tomorrow, Friday.

Morocco

Christopher Gives Delegation Clinton Message

LD1101144895 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher received in Washington yesterday a Moroccan delegation headed by Andre Azoulay, his majesty's adviser for economic and financial affairs, and including Taieb Fassi El Fihri, secretary of state for foreign affairs and cooperation, and Mohamed Benaissa, his majesty's ambassador in Washington.

The meeting particularly dealt with the means for strengthening bilateral cooperation relations, and the situation in the Middle East region. During this meeting, Warren Christopher handed Mr. Andre Azoulay a message from U.S. President Bill Clinton to His Majesty King Hassan II.

On this occasion, Christopher expressed his satisfaction at the excellent relations which bind Morocco and the United States, and highlighted the important role his majesty the king has been playing at the international level. He pointed to the success of the Islamic conference which was held recently in Casablanca, and the prospects furnished by his majesty's presidency of the Islamic Conference Organization. [passage omitted]

Basri Dispute Scuttles Alternative Government

LD1101134795 Rabat MAP in English 1325 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Jan. 11 (MAP)—King Hassan II renounces, for the time being, to form an alternation government and will set up a new cabinet where the present parliamentary majority will predominate, a release by the Royal Office said.

The release circulated here this Wednesday specified that the three major opposition parties, namely the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), the Istiqlal Party (IP) and the Organization for Democratic and Popular Action (OADP) confirmed adherence to the proposal made last summer by King Hassan II to form a new government. They, however, 'voiced radical opposition to the presence of Driss Basri', state minister for the interior and information, within the would-be cabinet, the release said.

While understanding the reasons behind their opposition, as they expressed them, King Hassan II deemed that the fulfilling of such a request 'will seriously harm the good running of the sacred institutions of the country', the relase said.

If the moves undertaken up to now to form an alternation government have not succeeded, the reasons to hope for setting up such a government during the current parliamentary term remain perfectly conceivable, the release pointed out. The release recalled the various audiences King Hassan II granted to the USFP, IP and OADP leaders, respectively Mohamed el Yazghi, M'hamed Boucetta and Mohamed Ben Said Ait Idder as well as to leaders of other political parties, namely Maati Bouabid (Constitutional Union/UC), Mohand Laensar (Popular Movement/MP), Ali Yata (Party for Progress and Socialism/PPS), Ahjoubi Aherdane (National Popular Movement/MNP), Arsalane el Jadidi (National Democrat Party/PND) and Ahmed Osmane (National Rally of Independents/RNI). Meetings were also held with the sovereign's advisors.

King Hassan II had announced last October 14, on the occasion of the inauguration of the parliamentary fall session, his decision to form an alternation cabinet gathering opposition parties and the parties they might ally with to reach a numeric majority in the parliament. The sovereign had also said the prime minister of this cabinet would be chosen from the opposition.

Royal Court on Decision To Form Government

LD1101142195 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 11 Jan 95

[Statement issued by the Royal Court on 11 January]

[FBIS Translated Text] On 14 October last, and during the inauguration of the parliamentary year by his majesty the king, may God make him victorious, King Hassan, may God preserve him, was gracious enough to announce his decision to form an alternating government on condition that it be formed from the opposition parties and the parties which wished to join them in order to guarantee it a numerical majority inside the parliament. His majesty pointed out that he would choose the prime minister for this government from among the members of the National Bloc.

Following that, his majesty received Mr. Mohamed El Yazghi, deputy secretary general of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, and Mr. Mohamed Boucetta, secretary general of the Istiqlal Party. They announced their acceptance of the noble decision, and asked to be given some time to prepare the government's program and look for allies from among the parties represented in the parliament.

At the time when contacts were under way, especially through some of his majesty's advisors, his majesty received respectively Messrs Maati Bouabid [leader of The Constitutional Union Party], Mohamed Laensar [leader of The Popular Movement], Ali Yata [leader of The Progress and Socialism Party], Mahjoubi Aherdane [leader of The National Popular Movement], [Mohamed] Arsalane El Jadidi [leader of the National Democratic Party], and Ahmed Osman [leader of the National Rally of Independents]. Each one of them was accompanied by members of their party's high bodies.

Mr. Ahmed Reda Guedira, his majesty the king's adviser, recently received Messrs El Yazghi, Boucetta, and [Mohamed] Bensaid Ait Idder [leader of the Organization for Popular and Democratic Action]. Each of them affirmed to him their response to the royal decision without associating it with any sort of condition, except that they added that they objected to the presence of Mr. Driss Basri among the members of the alternating government.

His majesty the king, may God preserve him, understood the reasons for the Bloc leaders' objections, but considered that complying with them could dangerously affect the good running of the sacred institutions. He has decided at present to refrain from forming an alternating government, and to form instead a new government in which the current parliamentary majority constitutes the prevailing element.

Thus, if the efforts made in this sphere have not led to what his majesty wished, the hope of forming an alternating government during this legislative term remains conceivable and desired.

Sudan

Rejection of IGADD Proposal Reiterated

EA1101161295 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The minister of state in the office of the president and head of the government delegation to the peace talks, Dr. Ghazi Salah al-Din, has reiterated that Sudan rejected the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development [IGADD] group's proposal on appointing an international observer to the peace talks. In an interview with the radio reporter, his excellency added that the IGADD group's brief was confined to mediation only and therefore it had no mandate to appoint another side without consulting Sudan. He announced that Sudan considered the appointment of an observer inconsequential in practice and would therefore not work with him. Dr. Ghazi added that this measure taken by the IGADD group raised many questions regarding the group's [IGADD's] conduct.

Concerning the peace talks, the minister of state in the office of the president announced that the talks had made no progress, pointing out that the IGADD committee had no spirit of innovation and came up with nothing new to push the talks forward.

Dr. Ghazi stressed the importance of achieving peace from within the country saying that such a peace would restore normalcy in the areas of the south affected by war and restart development activities in these areas.

Chadian Envoy Praises Border Demarcation Plan

EA1101164095 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 10 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of the Republic, Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, has received a letter from Chadian President Idriss Deby concerning bilateral relations and joint cooperation in all spheres. The letter was delivered to his excellency by Deby's adviser on Arab and Islamic affairs.

During the meeting, the adviser said he conveyed to Lt. Gen. al-Bashir the congratulations of the Chadian president on the occasion marking the 39th anniversary of Sudan's independence.

At the same time, Deby's adviser praised the implementation of the plan to redraw the border between Sudan and Chad. He pointed out that the plan would limit anything which might place a strain on the distinguished relations between the two fraternal peoples.

There are indications that the Chadian official arrived in the country yesterday on an official visit which would last several days, during which he will hold discussions with a number of officials.

Committee To Pursue Agreements With China

EA1101193995 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 2245 GMT 10 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The minister of industry and commerce, Dr. Taj al-Sirr Mustafa, yesterday issued a decree setting up a committee to follow up on the implementation of the economic and trade agreements signed between the Republic of Sudan and the People's Republic of China. The decree stated that the appointment of the committee was aimed at achieving the desired goals in the two sides' relations especially in the economic and trade spheres.

The committee would be responsible for all agreements, protocols and contracts between Sudan and China, both in the public and the private sector, as well as in the spheres of economic and trade cooperation. The committee would also be responsible for monitoring the implementation of these agreements by coordinating with the relevant quarters so as to gather data and write comprehensive reports regarding them as well as ensuring that both sides adhere to the agreements.

The committee would also be responsible for preparing quarterly reports to be submitted to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, with copies distributed to ministries concerned with the agreements, protocols and contracts. The committee will also coordinate with the Foreign Ministry to get information and reports about visits and meetings involving Sudan and the PRC, both in the public and private sector.

Election Official on Voter Registration Drive

EA1101164495 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of the Republic, Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, has stressed that elections would be held on schedule, pointing out that this was a political obligation that must be discharged. He said this today during a meeting in his office at the Council of Ministers with Brigadier Hasan Hamadayn, the secretary of the National Conference, and Mr. 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Zayn al-Nahhas, the director of the National Electoral Commission.

Mr. al-Nahhas announced that they had discussed the steps taken by the commission, such as issuing regulations for the different stages of the elections.

Mr. al-Nahhas pointed out that the voter registration exercise kicked off in all states of Sudan on 7 January and is expected to be completed in two weeks time. He also said that they had discussed the problems and obstacles facing the commission's (?leadership) and the electoral subcommittees in the states. He said these problems included scarcity of funds, (?fuel), and printing materials.

In response, the president of the Republic, pledged to reduce the financial and communication difficulties by providing government trucks so that the elections can be held on schedule.

Kuwait

Official: Lifting of Iraq Sanctions UN Matter

LD1101191695 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1740 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait City, 11 Jan (KUNA)—Kuwait today said that the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Iraq was an international matter between the latter and the Security Council, and that it was contingent on Iraq's full implementation of the Security Council resolutions. Kuwait also stressed that it had nothing to do with this.

These statements were made by an official source at the Foreign Ministry in reply to a question by KUNA on the call made by General Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Rashid Al Maktum, heir apparent in the emirate of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, which was published today and in which he called for the rebuilding of bridges between the peoples of Kuwait and Iraq.

The source said: "We hope that Iraq will implement all the relevant Security Council resolutions in full in order to overcome the difficult period the fraternal Iraqi people are going through and for which the ruling regime in Iraq is primarily responsible."

The official Kuwaiti source added: "We followed with interest the statements made by Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Rashid Al Maktum, and we appreciate his concern for Kuwait, the safety of its people, and the preservation of its security and stability. We also remember with pride the marvelous fraternal stand adopted by the people of the United Arab Emirates when they harbored Kuwait's citizens during the Iraqi invasion. We also remember the contribution of the United Arab Emirates, with all its means, to the liberation of Kuwait."

The source said in this respect that "the bridges between the peoples of Kuwait and Iraq were always strong and firm and built on the firm principles of brotherhood when wisdom prevailed, but the bridges collapsed after they were torn apart by the ruling regime in Iraq through its invasion of Kuwait and the eviction of its people."

The Foreign Ministry's official source said that the Iraqi invasion was an "unprecedented act in the inter-Arab relations and an attack against all laws and conventions that led to the division and disunion we are experiencing now."

The source said: "We share the views of Muhammad Bin-Rashid Al Maktum and the nation over the suffering of the Iraqi people from the measures taken by the UN Security Council as a result of the Iraqi aggression on the State of Kuwait, and it causes us pain over the continuation of these difficulties, but we ask: Who is responsible for this suffering and who put Iraq in such a painful position?"

The Kuwaiti official source noted that the two resolutions issued by the Security Council, Resolutions 706 and 712 had provided Iraq with a formula that would enable it to sell quantities of its oil so it could import its needs of essential items, however, the regime in Iraq refused to benefit from this mechanism despite the efforts made by the UN secretary general.

The source added "...[ellipses as received] Therefore, the regime in Iraq is the one who is first and foremost responsible for the difficulties the Iraqi people are experiencing at this stage and not the State of Kuwait or its people."

The official source added: "We hope that Iraq fully implements all pertinent Security Council resolutions to overcome this difficult phase the brotherly Iraqi people are going through."

Accordingly, the source affirmed that "the issue of lifting sanctions against Iraq is an international one and concerns Iraq and the Security Council and is effected by Iraq's full compliance with the Council's resolutions, and Kuwait has no connection with this matter."

Press reports published today have reported Shaykh Muhammad Bin- Rashid Al Maktum's call for an Iraqi-Kuwaiti rapprochement, quoting him as saying "the destiny of Kuwait and Iraq is to be neighbors and their peoples have to deal with each other despite all the tragedies they have suffered during the Kuwait liberation war."

British Envoy Opposed To Opening Office in Iraq

LD1201112495 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0842 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 12 Jan (KUNA)—William Fullerton, Britain's ambassador to the State of Kuwait, has said that Britain "does not agree to the opening of an office to look after its interests in Iraq."

In an interview with AL-SIYASAH newspaper today, Fullerton said that Britain does not agree to do that personally, because "the time is not suitable." He added: "We believe that the time is unsuitable to make an easing step, and we do not find it an encouraging step as a future signal [as received], especially after last October's crisis when Iraq deployed its forces on the Kuwait-Iraqi border."

He said "Iraq's total compliance with all the Security Council's resolutions, including the release of the Kuwaiti prisoners, will enable it to return to the international community."

Fullerton denied any likelihood that the French step in opening an office to look after French interests in Iraq would accelerate the break-up of the international alliance which liberated Kuwait in 1991. He said that "France has not changed its position toward the sanctions, but its position in opening an office to look after its interests represents an administrative step as the French ambassador to the State of Kuwait said a few days ago."

On the other hand, and in the course of his reply to a question about the review of the sanctions imposed by the Security Council on Iraq, and whether Iraq has done anything positive for which it should be rewarded, Fullerton said: "We do not believe that. The Iraqi decision to recognize Kuwait was taken after many pressures on Iraq, and we do not believe that people should be rewarded for things they were obliged to perform."

Fullerton stressed Britain's continued adoption of an active and effective diplomacy in the United Nations to maintain unanimity over the Security Council's resolutions on Iraq, "pointing out that talks have been held with the Kuwaiti Government and reassurances given, and Kuwait has no doubts about our position."

On the other hand, and in a reply to a question about Britain's participation in any formula for regional security arrangements in the area, Fullerton pointed out that "there was a defense agreement between Kuwait and Britain, signed in 1992, and numerous forms of cooperation with Kuwait in the spheres of military training and joint exercises with the Kuwaiti naval forces, in addition to the presence of a British military mission attached to the Defense Ministry in the State of Kuwait." [passage omitted]

On the other hand, and in reply to a question about whether Iran constitutes a threat to the security and stability of the Gulf region, the British ambassador expressed his hope that Tehran will play a constructive and peaceful role in the Gulf region. He said: "We want to establish good relations with Iran."

Qatar

Cabinet Regrets 'Ferocious' Operations in Chechnya

JN1101144795 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1242 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Doha, 11 Jan (WAKH)—The State of Qatar said it strongly regrets the continued suffering of the Chechen people as a result of the ferocious military operations in Chechnya, the deterioration this has caused, and the losses in innocent human lives sustained.

During a meeting held today under His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, Qatari minister of defense and heir apparent, the Qatari Council of Ministers reiterated its support for all efforts to resolve the dispute through dialogue and negotiations in order to achieve peace and stability throughout Chechnya. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Al-Shar' Riyadh Visit Linked to Iranian-Gulf Ties

MM1101164495 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 11 Jan 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Sulayman al-Nimr: "Al-Asad Message to King Fahd Was Accompanied by Endeavors To Improve Gulf-Iranian Relations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh—Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has announced that the message he conveyed the evening before last to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz from President Hafiz al-Asad concerns all developments in the region and the peace process in the Middle East.

The Saudi monarch received the Syrian foreign minister in Riyadh. The meeting lasted three hours, during which time they discussed "important developments in the region that prompted the Syrian minister's urgent visit to Riyadh."

A source who accompanied Minister al-Shar' has said that the latter's visit to Saudi Arabia is linked to his visit to Tehran early in the week. The source said that "Syria is seeking to improve Iranian-Gulf relations." This was confirmed by the Syrian foreign minister in a statement to AL-HAYAH when he said "Syria is interested in the improvement of relations between Iran and all the region's states for the sake of Gulf security and stability." Minister al-Shar' denied any mediation, saying "there is no mediation in the specific sense of the word."

As is known, Iranian relations with the Gulf states, especially the United Arab Emirates [UAE] and Saudi Arabia, are experiencing a state of deterioration as a result of the Iranian-UAE dispute over the three UAE islands occupied by Iran—Tunb al-Kubra, Tunb al-Sughra, and Abu Musa—and also because of the Iranian media campaigns launched from time to time against the kingdom.

Well-informed political sources expressed their belief that President al-Asad's message to the Saudi monarch contained Iranian ideas aimed at improving relations between Tehran and Riyadh. It has been learned that the Saudi capital responded positively to these ideas.

Diplomatic observers in the region believe that Tehran seems to be scared by the U.S. statements on the imminence of its acquisition of nuclear weapons—statements which coincided with Israeli threats to hit Iranian nuclear installations. This is why it seems that Iran is currently seeking to try to improve its relations with its Gulf neighbors.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal held a meeting yesterday morning with his Syrian counterpart. The meeting dealt with completing a discussion of the issues which King Fahd had discussed with Minister al-Shar', especially relations between Riyadh and Damascus. AL-HAYAH has learned that the Syrian foreign minister's talks in Riyadh also dealt with developments over the past two weeks in the peace process in the Middle East. The authoritative circles did not reveal the nature of these developments.

Minister al-Shar' left Riyadh for Damascus after the meeting.

King Fahd Addresses Shura Council

LD0801213895 Riyadh SPA in English 2009 GMT 8 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Jan 8, SPA—Custodian of the two holy mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz inaugurated here Sunday [8 January] the annual special Shura council sitting at the beginning of the second year of the Council's first session.

He was greeted at the Council premises by Council Chairman Shaykh Mohammad Bin Jabir, Deputy Chairman Dr. 'Abdallah Omar Nasif and Secretary General Dr. Humud al-Badr.

The ceremony was attended by Second Deputy Premier, Minister of Defence and Aviation and Inspector General Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd- al-'Aziz, Vice-Minister of Defence and Aviation and Deputy Inspector General Prince 'Abd-'al-Rahman Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Minister of Public Works and Housing Prince Mu'tib Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-faysal, Prince Turki al-Faysal, Assistant Minister of Defence and Aviation for Civil Aviation Affairs Prince Fahd Bin 'Abdallah Bin Mohammad, General Mufti Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Baz, many ulemas, ministers and senior officials.

King Fahd was accompanied by the counsellor to the royal court Prince 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz.

The custodian of the two holy mosques extemporized a speech in which he expressed hope that this meeting would be renewed annually and that the Council would realize the interests of Islamic creed and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

King Fahd said he and the Council of Ministers wish to assist Shura Council members in all important issues, "which are all honourable matters that have no misunderstanding or interference."

He stressed that the Shura Council was quite useful in fully studying the important issues referred to it and giving sound opinions on them.

He reiterated that the Kingdom will always remain committed to the holy Koran and the teachings of the prophet Mohammad.

"Yes, we listen and see, but we do not interfere in the affairs of others. It is sufficient for us to have this country enjoy stability and security," King Fahd said and prayed to Allah to guide him in performing his duties.

King Fahd cited the implications of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and praised the almighty Allah who supported the Kingdom with the help of troops from all-over the world until it came out victorious.

He said the Kingdom felt a duty of hosting these troops which were sent to reinforce the military capabilities of the Kingdom.

"It had been very difficlt to convince these countries with the Saudi opinion, but they eventually convinced after they saw the big mistake committed by an Arab state against Kuwait and that what happened to Kuwait would have happened to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We are loving each other, love our brothers in Kuwait and in the other Gulf countries in general and would never delay if we could do something for them," the king said.

After that, King Fahd added, the country suffered disasters as the result of the the big ordeal, it sustained losses in men and money in addition to what happened to Kuwait after the unprecedented event. He enumerated the numerous favors done by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for Iraq in the past but, instead of extending thanks to them, it caused tremendous lives and material losses.

King Fahd expressed hope that God will help the Saudi Government to perform its duty towards pilgrims and visitors of the two holy mosques and foreign students who study in Saudi universities.

He said the Kingdom suffered billions in losses and is currently trying to repay some of them. He added that the recent increase in the prices of some services, as is the view of the Council of Ministers and the Shura council, part of the Saudi citizen's duty to bear part of the burden.

He said the crisis was triggered by a country that the Kingdom supported in publicly and secretly and that the money was spent to repel an enemy that does not know the meaning of friendship.

He said the presence of foreign troops in the Kingdom was dismissed as a mistake, but recalled the "words said by Muslim leaders in this country: This was an absolute necessity."

He said it was only logical and reasonable to extend all possible services to the people who sacrificed their lives to defend the Kingdom.

King Fahd told the Council that what had been rendered by the Kingdom, in certain cirumstances, for troops that supported the Saudi forces, was a duty in recognition of the great help they done to enable the Kingdom to endure its duties and then left for home after supported the Kingdom and liberated Kuwait.

He cited the dear sacrifices rendered by the Kingdom and Kuwait to repulse an agression of an Arab who pretended as a friend of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and received much support from them when in need.

He thanked all ulema who address peoples at universities and mosques and all citizens who defend the country with good words.

Referring the recent hike of charges and services of public services which was announced last week, King Fahd refuted allegations that such measures would hamper development process and industrial, agricultural and constructional production and said if such measures were not introduced, the Kingdom, one day, will find itself flooded with domestic and international loans needed to meet requirements.

King Fahd urged citizens to compere between the recent increases of some services and materials in the Kingdom with similar ones in countries with similar financial capabilities. He said he ordered officials to prepare comparative lists on petroleum, diesel, water and electricity and other vital items'prices to see whether the increase is reasonable.

There are only two options, either to shoulder the burden of debts which we must repay or to seek the help of the almighty Allah and press on citizens for a short span of time until matters could be normalised God willing, he said and added that officials were ordered to make comparison about the charges which, the Shura council and Council of Ministers proposed their lifting gradually and with few loss of money.

The king acknowleged that the Kingdom has been indebted to national and foreign parties that should be repaid at a time when it has to maintain commitment on going ahead with the development projects, and so, instead of seeking foreign help, it has been decided to seek the help of citizens who must show patience for a limited span of time.

"I believe that when citizens become aware on what has been decided by the state, they would be convinced that we traced the right and the best way instead of stretching our hands to others, otherwise, every body is read to extend a loan to the Kingdom and matters would remain where they are," he said.

He said Saudi Arabia was the first country to reduce the prices of services such as water, electricity and many others and expressed hope that things will be back to what they were soon.

He stressed that neither the Shura Council nor the Council of Ministers have a desire to raise prices, or to help some people make gains and hurt others.

"But in certain cases, man gives what holds dearest to fight for many things, the most important of which is the Islamic creed, the prevention of corruption in the country and repelling attempts to occupy the country," the monarch said.

He stressed that these measures were taken for two purposes: to carry out the interests of citizens and to pay back debts that declined from sr 40 billion to 15 billion.

Debtors have no patience or appreciation of the circumstances, he added, reiterating that this increase in prices is only temporary until things return to normal.

King Fahd said there was no need to borrow from international banks which demand a large interest, when the Saudi Government and citizens can patiently overcome this issue.

"I believe it is better than to burden ourselves with foreign debts. No bank or government would refuse if the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia asked for billions. They would be willing to provide such loans," he said adding that such loans would only lead to more burdens.

He said the Kingdom was a large country which needs more hospitals, roads and other services on all levels, which put the Saudi Government in a situation of choice between having the citizens share the burden of things that used to come easier to them, and borrowing heavily from foreign countries.

He added that those who complain about the new prices should think back to when they were happy with the prices for tens of years. He also confirmed that low-income citizens have been spared the burden of the new price hikes which were designed not to target the poor.

The custodian of the two holy mosques expressed thanks to citizens who attended the meeting, foremost among whom is Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz Bin-Baz, the general mufti, and honourable scholars who take the greatest credit for explaining critical issues to muslims all over the world.

He said a few decades ago, the Kingdom had nothing, but when it found the resources it reached the highest level of development and progress.

He pointed to the progress achieved in the fields of agriculture and industry and reiterated the Kingdom's commitment to Islamic Shari'ah.

Finally he promised that he would work to achieve what is useful for the country and keep away from matters that would harm it.

*New Commercial Port Completed at Diba'

95AE0012A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 27 Nov 94 pp 65-68

[Article by Mahir 'Abbas: "Inauguration of Eighth Saudi Maritime Achievement: Diba' Port Compresses Distance Between Saudi Arabia and Egypt to 1 Hour"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The inauguration of the commercial port of Diba' on the shore of the Red Sea in the north-west of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has added a new landmark and a new gateway on the western shore of the kingdom. Whoever stands on the historical rock of Diba' City and looks at the map of the area on the eastern shore of the Arab Republic of Egypt, where the Egyptian port of Safajah is located, will recognize the strategic depth and the regional, international, as well as the local importance of Diba' Port. Prince Fahd Bin Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, prince of the Tabuk district, inaugurated it 7 November in the presence of a number of ministers and functionaries.

Strategically, the port constitutes an important gateway, not only for Tabuk, but for the entire northern district and the cities of the northern part of the kingdom. This will be reflected in future development, export, and import plans. Its completion constitutes the realization of an aspiration and a dream that will benefit hundreds of thousands of Egyptians working in the kingdom and the Gulf as well as citizens of the kingdom and the Gulf who visit Egypt, particularly during the summer season. This confirms the well-founded fact that Tabuk, or in short Diba', will have a million ferry passengers annualy, as only 60 nautical miles separate it from the Egyptian port of Safajah. Modern ferries (Hovercrafts) can cover it in one hour, while regular ferries will require approximately three hours. In accordance with studies, the port is projected to become an important artery to transport pilgrims not only from Egypt, but also from North Africa and Europe, be it those who travel directly by sea or through Egypt. Moreover, this port will develop transportation and commercial traffic between the kingdom and Egypt. When asked by AL-MAJALLAH about the regional and local importance of the port, Prince Fahd Bin Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, prince of the Tabuk district, indicated: "Its location in the north of the kingdom gives it a special importance. The building of the port was preceded by a study of everything that is technically or economically related to it. It was not inaugurated until comprehensive studies were conducted on it by specialists."

Prince Fahd adds that anyone who looks at a map of the Middle East and the world would recognize the position and standing of Diba' in the Middle East region and understand thoroughly its commercial and economic importance for the kingdom and the region. It is an important artery between Asia and Africa.

Looking at Saudi ports on the western shore, we would observe that to the north, they ended at the industrial port of Yanbu'. After that, there were no commercial ports for another 1,000 km. For that reason, the port of Diba' could become an important element in reducing the distance for anyone coming from the Mediterranean. It would thoroughly compress the distance, especially for exported or imported goods from and to the north of the kingdom.

He added that its value is also to be found in reducing the distance between the kingdom and Egypt. Mutual requirements and the authorities responsible for land, maritime, and commercial transportation between the two countries will determine the manner and quality of operation. He indicated that a maritime transportation company with a value of 200 million riyals [SR] ($54 million) is being incorporated to deal with transportation matters.

Prince Fahd expects that the port will shortly begin operations, indicating that the most important matters will be the completion of the equipment to safeguard passenger traffic and the provision of ships with a good level of maintenance, excellence, and quality to ensure the safe transportation of passengers.

The Eighth Port

The eighth port on Saudi shores, Diba' Port which has been inaugurated is part of an integrated plan by the state, which has spent more than SR40 billion on developing and expanding ports. According to official Saudi reports, the ports of the kingdom annually receive 95 percent of the total exports and imports of the kingdom. Excepting crude oil, Saudi ports received 80 billion kg of goods. They receive 15,000 ships annually at the rate of approximately one every half-hour.

The cost of Diba' Port amounted to SR160 million ($43 million). It is located at a distance of 180 km from Tabuk at longitude 35 degrees 40 minutes east and latitude 20 degrees 27 minutes north. It is 25 km north of Diba' city.

It was implemented in two stages in more than 14 years. The first and initial stage was devoted to studies of the location, the soil, and economic utility culminating in the selection of its present location as the most suitable one for the port. After that, the required designs and engineering consultations were conducted. The first stage, which cost SR97 million, involved the construction of three wharves, 600 meters in length and 10.5 meters in depth with outfitting for rolling [dahrajah] ships and one wharf for the exclusive use of coast guard boats, another for ship maintenance, and a third for fishing. The port was also equipped with a 6,000-square-meter warehouse for storing goods. An entrance channel, 11 meters in depth, was completed, as well as a 800-meter fence for the boundary of the port. The port is capable of receiving three ships at one time, each with a 30,000-ton capacity.

Several service facilities for the port were constructed, including executive offices, customs, departure and arrival terminals, a water purification station, a telephone network, and an internal highway network that connects to the port. The water purification station has a daily capacity of 120,000 gallons and three water storage facilities with a capacity of 1,200 cubic meters. This is in addition to radar and maritime communications equipment and security and safety agencies.

Experts estimate the annual capacity of the port at approximately 700,000 tons.

Diba' Port actually became operational during the war to liberate Kuwait when it was used to receive oil shipments. It was being used as an oil port with a loading capacity of six tankers per hour. During the crisis, it received 28 oil tankers, and from it, 23,000 transports were loaded with oil products which were transported to the northern district.

Increase in Tourism Activity

Diba' Port is expected to double tourist traffic especially to Egypt for those who prefer to travel overland or in their cars. The port will become an important drawing factor from the point of view of reducing travel time from Diba' to Safajah to three hours by regular ferry or to a third of that time by fast Hovercraft. In past years, travelers to Egypt took the Haqil highway through the Saudi inlet to the Jordanian port of al-'Aqabah before boarding the ferry to the Egyptian port of Nubi' [as transliterated].

The trip used to take an extended amount of time in entry or exit formalities to [and from] Egypt. At peak periods during the summer vacation season it would take approximately two days of waiting at the dock of al-'Aqabah port, not to mention the distance traveled inside the Sinai peninsula (400 km) across Nawbi' highway and the Martyr Ahmad Hamdi tunnel, passing through the city of Nakhal. As for the new situation from Safajah, it flows into the heart of the cities of upper Egypt (100 km from Qinah). It is near Luxor and Aswan, in addition to its proximity to the new Egyptian tourist attraction district on the shore of the Red Sea, the tourist villages at al-Ghardaqah. The port is 320 km from the Suez across a coast highway. Tourism experts in Egypt declare that Diba' Port will constitute a drawing factor for an increasing number of tourists crossing overland into Egypt.

In the latest Egyptian tourist estimate issued by the Chancellor of the Fund to Revitalize Egyptian Tourism, Dr. Farid al-Qadi, in which he deals with the number of tourists during the first nine months of this year, he pointed to an increase in the number of tourists from the kingdom by a large percentage. The kingdom occupies first place in the total number of tourists visiting Egypt among the number of Arab tourists, which is approximately

859,000 tourists. This figure represents 39 percent of the total number of tourists visiting Egypt.

It is expected that Diba' Port will double the volume of tourism to Egypt during the coming summer after it begins ferrying passengers.

The situation will be reflected in Tabuk City as a tourist attraction for those visiting it as part of Saudi planning for internal tourism. Experts call it the city of 1 million tourists because of its proximity to Jordan and of its welcome to overland travelers from many neighboring countries.

In this framework, Prince Fahd Bin Sultan stated to AL-MAJALLAH that a symposium will be conducted during 1995 about the promotion of tourism in Tabuk. The prince had invited businessmen and investors to invest in tourist projects in the district, while Tabuk is presently preparing for a big festival to promote tourism.

Tabuk Cement Company

The inauguration of the port coincided with an important industrial event that reflects future development steps which began to be accomplished in Tabuk and which are directly linked to the port as an outlet for export and shipping. Prince Fahd signed a contract on behalf of the cement company of which he is the honorary chairman to construct a cement factory in Tabuk with two Japanese companies, Mitsubishi and UBE. The cost of the factory amounts to SR964 million ($257 million). It will be implemented over 29 months with a daily capacity that reaches up to 3,500 tons.

'Abd al-Muhsin al-Mutlaq, deputy chairman of the board of the Tabuk Cement Company, stated that the plant includes living quarters, an electric station to feed the factory (45.5 megawatt/hour), and a water purification station with a daily capacity of 1,500 cubic meters.

Mubarak al-Khafrah, deputy minister of industry, reechoed the steps for economic development in Tabuk when he made an announcement about industrial projects that are awaiting implementation in the district. He summarized them in 24 new factories with financing totalling SR1.1 billion ($294 million), in addition to 18 standing factories with financing totalling SR168 million ($45 million). It should be mentioned that currently a pharmaceutical factory in Tabuk is nearing completion. Its foundation stone was laid several months ago and it is being implemented by Astra Company at a cost of SR200 million ($54 million).

In his comments on the Tabuk Cement Factory, al-Khafrah indicated that it was an important addition to the other seven factories in the kingdom. Their capacity amounted to 14 million tons, and work was currently in progress to expand it to 20 million tons.

United Arab Emirates

Decree Appoints Deputy Ruler of Dubai

JN0901150795 Dubayy AL-BAYAN in Arabic 5 Jan 95 p 1

[Text of Decree No. 2 for 1995 appointing a deputy ruler of the Emirate of Dubai]

[FBIS Translated Text] In pursuit of public interest and in accordance with the powers vested in us, we, Maktum Bin-Rashid Al Maktum, decree the following:

Article 1. Shaykh Hamdan Bin-Rashid Bin-Sa'id Al Maktum shall be appointed deputy ruler of the Emirate of Dubai and shall assume power during the absence of the ruler. He shall also exercise other powers as assigned to him.

Article 2. All competent quarters shall implement this decree, which shall go into effect as of the date of its issuance and shall be published in the official gazette.

[Signed] Maktum Bin-Rashid Al Maktum, ruler of the Emirate of Dubai

Issued in Dubayy on 3 Sha'ban 1415 of the Hegira, corresponding to 4 January 1995.

Minister on Kuwaiti Prisoners, 'Amity'

JN1001180895 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1545 GMT 10 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Dubayy, 10 Jan (INA)—Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Rashid Al Maktum, defense minister in the United Arab Emirates [UAE] and heir apparent of Dubai, has urged Kuwait to extend bridges of amity toward Iraq in order to heal Arab rifts. He added: It should be unacceptable for us to remain silent over the suffering experienced by the children, elderly, and women of Iraq.

In a statement to reporters aired over Dubai Television, the UAE official went on to say: At present, we see the Iraqi people suffering. "Is it permissible that we remain silent" and forget our history and Arabism?, he wondered.

When queried about Iraq's denial that it is holding 15 Kuwaitis [figure as received] in custody inside Iraq, the UAE defense minister said Iraq denies this, while Kuwait confirms it. Are the Kuwaitis in question prisoners or missing?, he wondered. If bridges of amity are extended toward Iraq, we will see Iraqis reciprocate with similar amity and friendliness toward those who support them in their ordeal.

The UAE official underscored a historical and geographic fact governing the relationship between Iraq and Kuwait when he said that Kuwait cannot overlook the fact of destiny which stipulates that it is a neighbor of Iraq.

The UAE defense minister reiterated the need to forget the past and not to resurrect it under any excuse or pretext, saying: Let us suppose that there are prisoners held in Iraq. Can the failure to deal with the Iraqi people bring about their release? Or will the construction of bridges of amity be conducive to the release of these prisoners, if there are any?

The UAE official indicated that Iraq has met most of the demands made by the UN Security Council. He added: It is the people who choose their leaders. So, let us not interfere in others' domestic affairs. We as Arabs and as a nation must support the Iraqi people.

Yemen

President's Saudi Visit Called Off After Border Clash

NC1101193795 Paris AFP in English 1856 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Jan 11 (AFP)—A high-level Yemeni delegation called off a visit to Saudi Arabia scheduled for Wednesday [11 January] after a clash on the border between the two countries, officials here said.

The delegation was to have paved the way for a trip to the Saudi kingdom by President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih. The officials said he was due to travel on Sunday, but that visit had now also been called off.

The president and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia discussed steps taken to contain the border incident during a telephone conversation on Tuesday [10 January], according to Yemen's official news agency SABA.

Officials here said Saudi-armed Yemeni tribesmen occupied a border post in the northeast of the country and hoisted the Saudi flag. A clash broke out with Yemeni border police, who recovered the post and ripped down the flag.

There was no official Saudi comment on the incident.

Earlier this month Yemen and Saudi Arabia agreed to halt military movements along their disputed border and pull their forces back from the area, following a series of clashes.

Tension has remained high between the two countries, whose relations deteriorated during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis when Riyadh accused Sanaa of supporting Baghdad.

In Yemen's civil war last year, Sanaa accused Riyadh of aiding southern Yemeni forces in their bid to break away from the north.

Yemen claims sovereignty over three Saudi provinces—Najran, Jizan and Assir—assigned to the kingdom under a treaty signed in 1934. Sanaa argues that the treaty expired in September 1992 and is opposed to renewing it.

'Aziz Accuses U.S. of Staging 'Theatrical Shows'

JN1101204695 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz has accused the United States of staging theatrical shows to divert world public opinion from the issue of lifting the embargo imposed on Iraq by presenting pictures of weapons which it claimed Iraq had transported from Kuwait.

In statements to journalists following his meeting with the UN Security Council president, Argentina's Ambassador Emilio Cardenas, in New York this morning, Tariq 'Aziz said: The U.S. allegations at the Security Council yesterday were theatrical and aimed at confusing the UN Security Council and preventing it from discussing the basic issue.

Tariq 'Aziz said that the UN Security Council's discussions yesterday were devoted to hearing a report from Ambassador [Rolf] Ekeus, chairman of the UN Special Commission. He said if the United States has solid information on such equipment and if it was really sincere about its intentions, then it should have sent such information through the proper channels to the United Nations.

He added: The UN secretary general and his assistants are responsible for such matters. When the United Nations receives information, it will send it to Iraqi authorities, which will then verify the information. When Iraq finds that such information is correct, it will act as it has in the past. Iraq is also prepared to act in this regard in the future.

The deputy prime minister said the United States' use of such claims is theatrical behavior that does not represent sincere intentions, but aims at stirring confusion at the Council.

Tariq 'Aziz said his talks with the UN Security Council president, which lasted 45 minutes, focused on the state of affairs between Iraq and the council at this stage. He said that he stressed to the council president that it is high time for the Security Council to act in a legal and fair manner because Iraq has fulfilled the basic requirements stipulated by the UN Security Council resolutions. He said that Iraq has expressed its sincere and serious readiness to continue cooperation with the UN Security Council, the UN Special Commission, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the other agencies concerned with following up the implementation of the UN resolutions.

He added that the letter and spirit of the UN resolutions dictate that the council should act positively toward Iraq in view of the accomplishments Iraq had made.

He said: There are two member states of the Council that are demonstrating an illegal and unfair position. I hope the representatives of those two states will change their attitude toward Iraq and start a fair and legal relaxation of the embargo.

Tariq 'Aziz stressed that Iraq does not hold any prisoners. He also said the case of the missing persons is being followed up by the International Committee of the Red Cross and by the three-party committee in Geneva, in which Iraq is participating in full. He stressed that Iraq is cooperating fully with the Red Cross and attended the meetings of the three-party committee and will attend its next meeting later this month.

Tariq 'Aziz said Iraq has provided information on 195 cases of missing persons.

The deputy prime minister refuted claims on contacts between Iraq and the Zionist entity, saying these claims are incorrect.

Asked about the Iraqi position on a previous UN resolution allowing the export of limited quantities of crude oil, Tariq 'Aziz said: Iraq's position depends on the provisions. If these provisions constitute an infringement on Iraq's sovereignty we will reject that. But if we have a clean deal to allay the difficulties facing the Iraqi people then Iraq may study this offer. But now is the time to discuss implementing Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 in a serious way and without any conditions. When the Security Council respects its own resolutions and interprets them in a legal and fair way and implements Paragraph 22, then the humanitarian aspects can be addressed because Iraq can export oil and other goods and meet the humanitarian needs of its people.

Meets Envoys at United Nations

JN1101171195 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1640 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] New York (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz today held a series of meetings with the ambassadors of former and current UN Security Council member states.

'Aziz met with Juan Barnuevo, Spain's permanent representative to the United Nations.

He also met at his place of residence with Makrim Wisuno [name as transliterated], Indonesia's deputy permanent envoy; Izak Aywah [name as transliterated], Nigeria's permanent envoy; Graf au Rantzau, Germany's permanent envoy; and Francesco Fulshi [name as transliterated], Italy's permanent envoy.

During his meetings with the ambassadors, Tariq 'Aziz reviewed Iraq's cooperation with the world organizations and the positive developments that have been achieved in relations with a number of permanent members of the UN Security Council, as well as the preparations for the council's review session.

Charge to Iran on Israeli Contacts, Regional Ties

NC1201102795 Tehran SALAM in Persian 28 Dec 94 p 8

[Interview with unidentified Iraqi Charge d'Affaires by an unidentified SALAM correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [SALAM] Incoming reports—irrespective of whether they are true or false—speak of Iraq adhering to the peace talks with Israel.

[Charge] I should refer to the holy Koran, which says: O ye who believe! (If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly. And afterward become full of repentance for what ye have done.)

[SALAM] This applies to all the incoming news. We would like to hear what you have to say.

[Charge] The answer is clear. Incoming reports on this are not true, although some Arab countries have become involved with contacts with Israel and the establishment of relations and ties and the acceptance of peace and want to involve others too. But the question now is: Will we also participate in these talks?

I should say that those Arab countries that have entered the peace talks faced the problem of territories occupied by Israel. They could not continue their struggle by adopting an independent policy and thus entered into talks with Israel. But Iraq has no occupied territories and does not share a border with Israel. Our stance is clear. Our stance on Israel is a national, popular, and unalterable stance. We have nothing to do with the others. This struggle is a struggle between Arabs and Zionists, not between Iraq and Israel. Iraq too is an Arab country. And, since this is the case, then our stance does not differ from Syria's stance on Israel.

Israel has succeeded in its strategy and has drawn every Arab country to the negotiating table. It alleges that Iraq is entering the talks with Israel so that Iraq can use this as a point to lift the economic sanctions against it. I think this is an idiotic way of thinking. Israel is not America's policymaker. Yes, it is true that they are allies and that their objective is to weaken the Arab regimes and that part of this policy is the continuation of the economic sanctions against Iraq. But apart from having a great influence on regional policies, Israel is not a country that makes decisions on whether the economic sanctions on Iraq should be lifted. What will end the economic sanctions is the Iraqi people's resistance. We have no need to enter talks with Israel so that the economic sanctions will be lifted. I repeat that this is an idiotic way of thinking.

[SALAM] Why did the Iraqi Embassy in Iran not issue a press statement to refute these rumors?

[Charge] We usually fax press releases to the newspapers. In this case too, we faxed a statement.

[SALAM] If the Arab countries' stance on Israel changes and they make peace with it, will Iraq's stance remain unchanged or will it change its policies like the rest of the Arab countries?

[Charge] Our stance is principled. We will never doubt this. This is not a point to be argued. Unfortunately the Iranian press has magnified this issue, while it has written nothing about Syria, which has even participated in peace talks with Israel. Hafiz al-Asad's talks with the Zionist enemy are a reality. But false reports have been widely published in the press. We hope you can differentiate between lies and truths.

[SALAM] We have commented on Syria's stance.

[Charge] We have studied these comments.

[SALAM] Despite everyone, even Iraq, wanting to portray the Palestinian problem as a problem between the Arabs and Israel, we do not see this problem from this perspective. We consider it a problem for all the world of Islam.

[Charge] I do not disagree with your point of view. You are right. But this problem can be described as one involving various intertwined circles, with countries that are closer to Israel being more involved. I consider this to be a conflict between humanity and Zionism. The biggest circle is the circle of human aspects. Next comes the circle of the Islamic-Zionist conflict and after that the circle of Arab-Israeli conflict and the conflict of countries directly involved with Israel.

Of course the Zionists have made some of the countries that are directly involved with Israel accept a compromise with it, like the mercenary regimes in the Persian Gulf. And naturally such countries spend billions of dollars for Israeli domination and supremacy in the region.

[SALAM] Now that we are discussing Israel, how do you assess the Gaza-Jericho pact, the prevailing situation, and 'Arafat's stance?

[Charge] We do not oppose what the Palestinians accept. We respect the Palestinians' choice. This is a principle. But we have maintained our principled stance. We believe that all Muslims have the right to the holy shrines. But our hearts beat with the hearts of every Palestinian who defends his homeland.

[SALAM] How do you assess the presence of foreign and American forces in the Persian Gulf?

[Charge] Our general and strategic outlook is that we do not consider America's presence in the Persian Gulf to be to the benefit of Iraq, Iran, or even Turkey and that relations among these countries should be ruled by understanding. This is the best stance that can be adopted.

Of course, this does not mean that we agree with the regional countries on every issue. We want peace talks with Iran, with which we have common interests and an extensive border, to expand. Despite past problems and difficulties in the two countries' relations, there are many possibilities and reasons for creating understanding between the two. But this does not mean that we should agree with Iran on every issue and policy or vice versa.

We have good relations with Russia (the former Soviet Union). But we disagreed with them on the occupation of Afghanistan. In this case I should say that, in our hearts, we were against this occupation and we also issued official statements to this effect. But we believe that a true friend is someone with whom you can be very frank.

[SALAM] We too believe that the future of Iran-Iraq relations should be considered. But we believe that a very favorable atmosphere should be created so that Iran-Iraq relations can expand.

[Charge] This is part of the duties of the press.

[SALAM] There is no doubt that the press may be able to do this. But there are some problems that automatically neutralize the efforts of the press. We stress that the way to resist imperialist domination is through the unity of regional countries and, at least, of countries that have anti-imperialist stances. A favorable atmosphere should be created to achieve this unity. We think that one of the biggest problems that have had a very negative impact on Iran-Iraq relations during the past few years is the problem of the Monafeqin [Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization].

We should seize this opportunity and state the true problems that exist and, since we really want relations between the two countries to expand and improve, I think that ignoring problems will prevent this from happening. Sometimes such problems can harm the interests of two countries, two nations.

[Charge] My answer is a question. You claim to have good relations with France, Germany, and Turkey. Are there not more Mojahedin-e Khalq there than in Iraq?

[SALAM] There may be more there. But they do not use the territory of these countries to attack Iran.

[Charge] They may also use Turkish territory and facilities for subversion and attacks against Iran.

[SALAM] We have signed an agreement with Turkey under which it is not to allow subversive acts against Iran from its territory.

[Charge] It depends on how much this agreement is observed. Those who are in Iraq are our guests and international laws allow us to accept anyone seeking political asylum. Their presence in Iraq does not mean that we agree with them on every point. The problem now is that whenever a subversive act is perpetrated in Iran and whenever an explosion takes place in Iran, an hour later, Iran immediately blames Iraq. But explosions take place in Baghdad too. But only after lengthy investigation do we announce that the explosion was perpetrated by America or someone else.

[SALAM] Because of their acts in Iran, the Monafeqin lack political value. Even ordinary people who are not interested in politics and even some groups and individuals that disagree with the Islamic Republic have a deep hatred for the Monafeqin.

[Charge] This is something that concerns you.

[SALAM] Yes, that is true. But you should bear in mind that we are referring to the issue of relations with Iraq. Knowing the hatred that is felt toward the Monafeqin and their record of perpetrating such acts, those who do not want these relations to be established attribute any explosion to them. But in many cases too it has been proven that the Monafeqin have perpetrated the crime.

[Charge] Those who are here?

[SALAM] The Monafeqin can be anywhere.

[Charge] We have discussed with Iranian officials that, in all cases, relations should be determined within a specific political framework. This is the main issue creating so many problems between the two countries. The solution of these problems calls for profound political talks between the two sides.

This is why experts have held talks and, God willing, we will discuss this topic during Velayati's visit. What is important between the two countries is mutual trust.

Relations should be formed on the basis of good neighborliness and should be in proportion with realities. The people in both countries are Muslims. They have common borders and social, historic, and religious bonds. All these are positive points that should be considered when reviving and expanding relations.

The Iraqi president recently said that Iran is the target of American policies. This is very important.

Since starting my mission in Tehran two years ago I have coordinated many discussions between the two countries and I believe that there is no problem between us that cannot be solved. During my meeting with Dr. Mohammad Javad Larijani I said we should be true and sincere. We cannot expect to see very warm, friendly relations between the two countries very soon. But we should display goodwill at least for the solution of current problems. There are common threats against Iran and Iraq now and these are big and extremely important. This is our stance, our decision, and our political determination.

But the first step is to create mutual trust. This is not something that Foreign Ministry staff, experts, or other ministries can do. This is an important political issue that calls for important political decisions and meetings.

If you agree with me on this, then we have no major differences of opinion.

[SALAM] We stress that a favorable political atmosphere should be created for both governments.

[Charge] I cannot discuss what is happening between us and the Iranian officials. But I can say that during the past two months we have had contacts with many Iranian officials and I have been issued orders by the Iraqi Government. The Iraqi leader is determined to improve Iraq's relations with Iran and I have pointed this out to all the Iranian officials I have met. You can rest assured that significant developments are taking place in the two countries' relations.

As a diplomat I foresee a new development in the making in the region, namely, the improvement of relations between Iran and Iraq.

[SALAM] Thank you for granting us the opportunity to hear your views.

PUK Official on Cease-Fire, Foreign Pressure

NC1101173695 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1515 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On 9 January the Follow Up Committee in Iraq's Kurdistan, made up of Dr. Ahmad al-Jalabi, chairman of the Executive Council of the unified Iraqi National Congress; Dr. Kamal Fu'ad, member of the

Political Bureau of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK]; and Jawhar Namiq Salim, member of the Political Bureau of the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP], decided to implement a cease-fire and normalize the situation in Kurdistan. The decision was made after a meeting of the committee in the hall where some parliamentarians were staging a sit-in, and after consultations with Jalal Talabani and Mas'ud Barzani.

The KDP's approval of the decision shows that the party's leadership has finally realized that the only choice it has is to engage in a dialogue and renounce war. To shed more light on the mission and peaceful efforts of the Follow Up Committee, KURDISTAN NWAY, the PUK's daily Kurdish-language newspaper, published in today's issue a lengthy interview it conducted with Dr. Kamal Fu'ad, PUK Political Bureau and Follow Up Committee member. Here is a translated summary of the interview:

Asked if he is optimistic about the Follow Up Committee's cease-fire decision, Dr. Fu'ad said: I cannot express optimism or pessimism about the decision. I leave this for the coming days. The implementation of the decision cannot be guaranteed by one side; the two sides must abide by it. [passage omitted]

Asked if there is need for the states of the Western alliance operating in Turkey to send representatives to supervise the normalization of the situation in Kurdistan, Dr. Fu'ad said: Although the forces of the international alliance, known as MCC [English abbreviation as heard], turned down this offer, they asked both sides to stop the fighting and try to normalize the situation immediately.

The newspaper's correspondent asked: During the current round of fighting, the PUK repeatedly and from the very beginning announced, through brother Jalal Talabani and the Political Bureau, its readiness for an immediate cease-fire. But the KDP regrettably failed to show a similar readiness. Why has the KDP finally accepted the cease-fire?

Dr. Kamal Fu'ad replied: Several factors forced the KDP to accept the cease-fire. At the beginning, the PUK expressed its readiness for a cease-fire, and its official position was unequivocally clear. The KDP, however, failed to take a similar clear and official position. He added: I attribute the KDP's acceptance of the cease-fire this time to the strong pressure on it and on both sides. There are 17 parties in Kurdistan, inside and outside the Kurdistan Front. And there are Kurdish mass organizations such as writers, men of religion, and others. All these and the people of Kurdistan pressured the two sides to stop the fighting. There was also foreign pressure from countries in the region, such as Turkey and Iran.

These regional, foreign, and internal pressures forced the KDP to take a step forward to stop the fighting, a greater step than before. Moreover, it became clear that the war is not in the interest of the people, especially if it is unjust, ignited for the control of customs revenues. It is clear that these revenues belong not to any party or side, but to the people and their daily life. Even if the war continues, it will not be a successful one because it is clear that the side that starts the aggression is not left alone but is confronted in the same way.

Dr. Kamal Fu'ad added: Foreign countries and charity organizations operating in Kurdistan do not want a certain party to control the customs of Kurdistan or prevent the arrival of foodstuffs to all areas of Kurdistan. Seizing the customs of Ibrahim al-Khalil bridge and obstructing the arrival of people's bread will be confronted and condemned by the Kurdish and world public. I do not think that any political side concerned about its future and that of its people can take such a step because it will certainly lead to its defeat.

Finally, the newspaper's correspondent asked Dr. Kamal Fu'ad: Can't we make the normalization decision the beginning of disarming the city of Irbil, as proposed by brother Jalal Talabani, noting that the PUK is in full control of the city? Dr. Kamal Fu'ad answered: We link disarmament in Irbil and our withdrawal from the city with the withdrawal of all armed men from all areas around Irbil.

Dr. Fu'ad concluded his statement to KURDISTAN NWAY by saying: As I said before, any normalization must come from both sides. We are prepared to normalize the situation immediately provided that the KDP does the same.

Attack on Turkmens, Effort To Increase Influence Reported

NC1201114895 Ankara TURKISH DAILY NEWS in English 9 Jan 95 pp 1, A8

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ankara—The Iraqi Turkmens, trying to assert their rights in Kurdish-held northern Iraq, said they were attacked early Sunday [8 January] by the guerrillas of one of the main Iraqi Kurdish political groups.

The attack brought a new dimension to the deteriorating stability in Kurdish-held northern Iraq, where the main Kurdish groups, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of Mas'ud Barzani and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), have been locked in heavy clashes over the past weeks. The fighting reportedly claimed hundreds of lives.

A statement issued by the Iraqi National Turkmen Party (INTP) said the party offices in the town of Zakho, across Turkey, had come under strong attack by the KDP forces.

One Turkmen fighter was killed in the clashes which lasted an hour and a half, and the defenders shot dead at least one KDP peshmerga (guerrilla) and wounded several others, the statement said.

The INTP offices and equipment sustained extensive damage in the attack, which was reportedly the heaviest of a series targeting the party since last November.

The Kurdish forces used rocket propelled grenades and automatic weapons in the assault, the statement said. The KDP representative in Ankara was not available for comment on the reported attack.

The Kurds earlier attacked the Turkmen radio and TV stations and culture associations in Irbil, the seat of the Kurdish administration, on Nov. 17-18 and the party's

Zakho office on Dec. 30, according to the statement. The INTP, which enjoys discreet backing from Turkey, is trying to increase their political status among Iraq's more assertive Kurdish groups.

Once dominating the oil-center of Kirkuk, the Turkmens accuse the Iraqi government of having carried out pogroms against them, massacring their leaders and dispersing them to reduce their influence.

The INTP officials claim the number of Turkmens in Iraq exceed 2 million, a claim disputed by the Kurds. The Turkmen leaders have been calling for a U.N.-monitored census to establish their true numbers, which they hope would increase their representation in the Kurdish-led representation.

Until recently, the Iraqi Kurdish administration and main Kurdish parties were taking care not to antagonize the Turkmens, obviously in view of their ties to Turkey which remains to be the only channel for the flow of relief aid. More vitally, a Western-air force deterring an Iraqi attack on Kurds has been based in Turkey for the past four years.

Al-Da'wah Party Delegation Reportedly Meets Regime

NC1001094195 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 2 Jan 95 p 10

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sources close to the Iraqi opposition say a delegation from the Iraqi regime and a delegation from the Islamic al-Da'wah Party met recently and discussed the possibility of achieving political reconciliation to be followed by steps toward the party's political participation in running the country's governmental and administrative affairs. [passage omitted]

The results of the talks have not been made public. But observers following the affairs of the regime and the opposition believe the meeting was a step toward breaking the psychological and political barriers between two foes who many believed would never meet at the negotiating table.

Constitutional Monarchists on Kurdistan, Opposition Unity

MM1101115795 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 9 Jan 95 p 5

[FBIS Translated Text] London—The "Constitutional Monarchist Movement in Iraq" [al-harakah al-malakiyah al-dusturiyah fi al-'iraq] announced in a statement distributed yesterday that a large number of opposition representatives and political figures had met at al-Sharif 'Ali Bin-al-Husayn's house in London to discuss ways of finding a solution to the ongoing conflict and infighting in Iraqi Kurdistan.

It also stressed that that the participants entrusted al-Sharif 'Ali with intensifying his contacts with opposition parties with a view to forming a delegation to travel to Iraqi Kurdistan to endeavor to halt the fighting. It pointed out that al-Sharif 'Ali presented to the meeting a plan for holding a meeting of the opposition leaders in order to "unify the Iraqi political rhetoric and form a national administration."

The plan focused on "the serious dangers threatening the opposition's work as a result of the painful events in Kurdistan and the possibility of a repetition of them in the future, whether in Kurdistan or in the areas to be liberated." The plan pointed out that the people's aspiration to get rid of injustice and to build a democratic party "is still faced with a bitter atmosphere of contradictions, disputes, and narrow interests on the part of a large section of the Iraqi opposition forces. Patriotism requires reinforcing and developing the national alliance.... This is why we sincerely urge all the factions to play their role in drawing up the right framework in order to tackle the tragic condition by holding a conference bringing the opposition leaders together." The plan went on: "We believe that the main task of that conference is to work to form a provisional Iraqi national administration whose task is to work unitedly to topple the regime and to get ready for assuming power in the transitional phase until a free people's referendum is conducted."

The memorandum called for "raising the intellectual and political conflict to a contemporary level based on peaceful coexistence and the right to differ." The memorandum urged "the formation of a committee to be agreed by national tendencies to prepare for convening the opposition leaders' conference, which will discuss the formation of an Iraqi national administration, ways of financing it, and its powers."

Saddam Chairs Cabinet Session, Praises Engineers

JN1101132995 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God watch over him, has underscored the distinguished role played by the civilian and military engineering personnel in the glorious Saddam's al-Qadsiyah [war with Iran] and the immortal Mother of Battles. He said: We all remember how the bulldozers took part in the forays against the enemy by preparing the positions for the fighters or when they advanced to dig positions for the armor corps.

His excellency said this and other historic roles performed by civilian and military equipment should be documented, and a special badge should be designed and attached to the pieces of equipment, even if those pieces should perish in the future. This is because these pieces should not be viewed as pieces of metal, but as metal that expresses national and spiritual pride.

His excellency the leader president made the remarks when he chaired the third session of the cabinet. The cabinet discussed several agricultural and irrigation projects and made the appropriate decisions.

No-Confidence Motion Submitted Over Bus Incident

TA1101125795 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The National Religious Party [NRP] and Tzomet today submitted a motion of no confidence in the government in the wake of yesterday's Netzarim bus incident.

In the past hours, the Knesset has been debating Abu-Mazin's [Mahmud 'Abbas] book, "The Road to Oslo." Our correspondent Hadar Vismonsky reports from the plenum:

[Vismonsky] The storm generated by Abu-Mazin's book has reached the Knesset. Likud faction chairman Moshe Qatzav today reiterated the demand for a state commission of inquiry into the senior PLO official's revelations. [passage omitted]

The NRP and Tzomet no-confidence motion will be debated on 16 January.

Rabin on Building Beyond Green Line in Jerusalem

TA1101133495 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 11 Jan 95 p A2

[Report by Nadav Shragay]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin announced yesterday that the government is sticking to its plan to establish a Jewish neighborhood on Har Homa, which is situated beyond the Green Line, along the southern boundary of Jerusalem's municipal jurisdiction. Rabin's remarks, which came at the conclusion of his tour of East Jerusalem and the Old City as the guest of the Jerusalem Municipality, were made in order to dispel, in his words, rumors that the government will refrain from establishing the new neighborhood to avoid hurting the peace process.

A lengthy series of legal discussions about the Har Homa lands was concluded recently. In the first stage, 4,000 housing units will be built on the hill, which is situated south of Kibbutz Ramat Rahel. The Peace Now movement declared several days ago that it will fight the construction of the neighborhood because it fears it will undermine the agreement between the PLO and Israel. The PLO itself has announced that it will suspend the peace process if the neighborhood is built.

"This project was and will continue to be part of the government's plans," Rabin said yesterday. "This is Jerusalem and is within the jurisdiction of its municipality. We cannot promote the building of new neighborhoods in the capital without expropriating land." The prime minister asserted that "70 percent of the land at Har Homa was expropriated from Jews and not from Arabs."

Prime Minister Rabin and Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer also gave Ma'ale Adumim Mayor Beni Kashri'el permission to issue building permits for another 790 housing units on site 06, in the southeastern part of Ma'ale Adumim. Until now, the Ma'ale Adumim council has refrained from issuing construction permits for the new neighborhood because it had not received permission to build any educational institutions. Ben-Eli'ezer brought the problem to Rabin's attention, and the prime minister immediately promised Kashri'el that educational institutions will be built in the new neighborhood. The permits were issued yesterday evening, and work on the new neighborhood, which until now was limited to ground-breaking activities, will start in the next few days.

[Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 11 January, in a page 5 report by Yehuda Golan, writes that Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer said yesterday that "30,000 housing units will be built in Jerusalem within the next five or six years." The report notes that "the large-scale construction plan calls for the massive construction of approximately 7,000 housing units at the Har Homa project, over 1,000 housing units on Giv'at Hamashu'a, several thousand housing units on Rekhes Shu'fat, approximately 8,000 housing units in the Ha'arazim Valley, and the remainder in other locations throughout the city."]

Gur: Country Must Assume Enemies Have Nuclear Option

TA1101160995 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel must assume that its enemies have a nuclear option, Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur told the Knesset today. Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu said that an Iranian nuclear acquisition would strengthen other Arab countries as well. At the same time, the Likud again raised its demand that a national commission of inquiry be set up to examine the disclosures in Abu-Mazin's [Mahmud 'Abbas] book, "The Road to Oslo." Our correspondent in the Knesset Hadar Vismonsky reports:

[Begin recording] [Vismonsky] The recent assessments that the Iranian nuclear option is now closer than ever disturb the Likud leader. Netanyahu explained that such a threat, dangerous on its own, will also have an impact on the conventional balance of power in the Middle East.

[Netanyahu] In a very short time, between three and five years, Iran will be independent in terms of its ability to produce and develop nuclear bombs. The biggest threat is the impact this will have on a conventional war coalition against Israel.

[Vismonsky] Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur did not try to placate anyone. He believes that the advancement of the peace process will reduce the threats to Israel, but nonetheless, Gur said, Israel must be prepared for any eventuality.

[Gur] Whether there are nuclear weapons in the world or not is not up to Israel. Israel, therefore, must operate on the assumption that this may happen and be prepared at all times and on all fronts. [passage omitted on 'Abbas book affair] [end recording]

'Source' Confirms 'Arafat Orders To Attack IDF

TA1101181095 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 11 Jan 95 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] (ITIM) A senior IDF [Israel Defense Forces] source has reported that the security forces are in possession of information according to which Yasir 'Arafat is keeping some 500 Fatah Hawks members on the payroll in case an incident occurs between the Palestinian Authority [PA] and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] or other rejectionist organizations.

The source said that recent reports that 'Arafat has ordered acts against Israeli targets are correct, but the attacks are to be carried out against IDF soldiers and not against civilians. The source added that the Fatah Hawks in the Gaza Strip receive a salary (some $200 per person), although they are not permanently active in the Palestinian security apparatuses and no longer engage in interrogating collaborators, as they had previously.

According to the source, 'Arafat knows well that contacts between Fatah Hawks and Hamas supporters might lead to violent clashes. He added that "it has now become clear that the masked persons who fired at the worshipers at the Filastin Mosque were members of the Fatah Hawks and not Palestinian policemen.

" 'Arafat has a very good reason for keeping the Fatah Hawks, even without work, on the chance that Hamas may act against the PA. 'Arafat does not want to put Hamas on the same footing as the Palestinian police and will fight Hamas with the Fatah Hawks."

The remarks refer to recent clashes between IDF soldiers and Palestinian policemen in the Erez and Qatif Bloc areas. A claim was made that 'Arafat had instructed the Palestinian police "to shoot at the IDF soldiers, even when they are firing in the air." The source added: "We have also learned that the order was issued after the three policemen were killed. A senior Palestinian police officer announced that if shots are heard from the Israeli side, the police will fire directly at them in response."

'Senior' Palestinian Official Detained in Jerusalem

TA1201083095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A senior Palestinian security service officer was apprehended at the Hizma roadblock in northeastern Jerusalem this morning. The officer, who was detained as he was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, was found in possession of a 9-mm handgun.

Rabin, Husayn Expected To Meet on Difficulties in Ties

TA1101194095 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 11 Jan 95

['Imanu'el Rosen video report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today in Tel Aviv, the Africa-Israel Company signed a deal with a Jordanian company. Everyone was smiling, the atmosphere was good, business was done. This is what the warm peace Husayn and Rabin spoke of should look like. But it does not really look like that.

Wires from Amman are piling up at the Foreign Ministry. Most of them speak of Jordan's displeasure with the slow, disappointing pace at which the agreement is being implemented. For example, a cable sent several days ago by Ya'aqov Rosen, Israel's envoy in Amman, cites several examples of discord in the relations: The Jordanians postponed an economic conference on the Jordan Rift Valley project, which was to take place this month and which Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres was to attend, for four months, and entry visas for two Israeli reporters have been held up for over a month.

Eytan Bentzur, Foreign Ministry deputy director general, who is in charge of relations with Jordan, summoned a special emergency meeting tomorrow to discuss the difficulties and mishaps in Israeli-Jordanian relations. Jordan spoke of a warm, special peace, but in the Foreign Ministry they are saying that this time, we are to blame for the situation. It is feared that this state of affairs might have a negative impact on Arab countries. Seeing that the fruits of peace are not as sweet and as quickly picked as could be inferred from the well-staged ceremonies, they may not rush to establish diplomatic ties with Israel.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Jordan's King Husayn are expected to meet next week to discuss the difficulties between the countries.

[Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 11 January adds: "Our correspondent Ehud Ya'ari reports from Amman that Jordan is complaining that Israel is delaying the appointment of an Israeli ambassador and is not implementing the agreement regarding the export of $30-million worth of Jordanian goods to the West Bank, and that the trade agreement has not yet been completed. Mr. Rabin sent a letter today to General Zayd Bin-Shakir, the newly appointed Jordanian prime minister, and to Dr. al-Majali, the outgoing prime minister."]

Turkey Protests Treatment of Foreign Workers

NC1101110495 Paris AFP in English 0928 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, Jan 11 (AFP)—Ankara officially protested Wednesday [11 January] to the Foreign Ministry at the treatment of Turks working in Israel, Ambassador Onur Gokce said.

The envoy said he went to the Foreign Ministry to ask Israel to ensure that the employers respect the conditions laid out in contracts under which the workers are recruited.

State radio reported that he had warned that failure to do so could harm relations between the two countries.

Labor Ministry spokesman Hanan Rubin agreed with Turkey and accused Israeli employers of "exploitation".

"Turkey is right to complain," he told AFP. "It is the employers who are responsible for the conditions of the workers they bring into Israel."

Foreign Ministry deputy director-general Eytan Ben Tzur added: "Those in Israel who want to get rich unscrupulously harm our image abroad."

The Labor Ministry issued 50,000 permits to workers from Turkey, Romania, Brazil, Portugal and Thailand. The foreigners are used mainly to replace cheap Palestinian labour considered a high security risk.

Labor Minister Ora Namir announced Wednesday that the number of inspectors who check work conditions would be doubled.

However, the chairman of the Israeli manufacturers' association Amos Baram said: "Foreign workers are treated well and paid correctly."

Foreign workers earn a monthly average of 500 dollars, half of which is taken to pay rent and food. The minimum wage in Israel is 540 dollars.

Neither the ministry nor the Turkish embassy could provide figures for the number of Turkish workers in Israel.

Sources Deny Allowing CIA To Debrief Dirani

TA1101180195 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 11 Jan 95 p 7

[Report by 'Oded Granot]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israel allowed a delegation of CIA experts to conduct a debriefing of Mustafa Dirani, head of the "Believers Resistance" in Lebanon who was kidnapped and brought to Israel at the end of May 1994, in jail. This is reported by the Arabic-language weekly, AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI.

The report says that the United States pressured Israel to allow experts to visit Dirani because it was not satisfied with the level of detail in the interrogation report the Israelis relayed to Washington, mainly on subjects that are of interest to the United States. [passage omitted]

Israeli sources have denied the report.

Meretz Ministers Divided on Future of 'Etzyon Bloc

TA1101175195 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 11 Jan 95 pp 1, 2

[Report by Moti Bassok]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There are disagreements among the Meretz ministers regarding the future of the 'Etzyon Bloc in the permanent settlement with the Palestinians.

While Ministers Yosi Sarid and Amnon Rubinstein believe that the bloc must remain in Israel's hands in any event, Minister Shulamit Aloni says that the issue will be discussed in negotiations with the Palestinians, and Minister Ya'ir Tzaban says that although he has "strong feelings for the 'Etzyon Bloc," if it becomes the dividing line between peace and war, he will support returning it to the Arabs.

Education and Culture Minister Amnon Rubinstein said in the course of a tour of Efrata yesterday: "I will work toward the "Etzyon Bloc settlements' remaining under Israeli sovereignty in the framework of the permanent peace agreement."

Minister Yosi Sarid said yesterday that the 'Etzyon Bloc should remain in Israel's hands even after the permanent arrangement. According to Sarid, the Green Line is not sacred, as will probably be reflected in the permanent arrangement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni said in answer to a question by DAVAR that when the time comes, we will have to sit down with the Palestinians and discuss the borders and border modifications in order to reach understanding and agreement.

"Imperialism is over. The issue will be decided by mutual agreement. Peace is built on agreement. A discussion, even a long one, may be necessary. The pretext that the 'Etzyon Bloc was Jewish land once is not a good argument. Yafo, Ramla, and Lod were also Arab land once. Does anybody think of giving them to the Arabs?" Aloni asked.

In Aloni's opinion, we must reach an agreement that will take into account the fact that thousands of Jews currently live in the 'Etzyon Bloc. According to Aloni, the 'Etzyon Bloc is not under the State of Israel's jurisdiction today, "and we may need to give the Palestinians something in return."

Immigrant Absorption Minister Ya'ir Tzaban said he has strong feelings for the 'Etzyon Bloc, going back to the days when he fought in that area during the War of Independence. He would prefer the bloc to be part of the State of Israel by mutual Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

At the same time, the future of the bloc is not a casus belli for him. If it transpires that the Palestinians are not prepared to give in on this matter and that the bloc is the dividing line between war and peace where Israel and the Arabs are concerned, he will be willing to give it up. [passage omitted]

UN Ambassador: No New Settlements, No Investment

TA1201060995 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israel's UN Ambassador Gad Ya'aqobi says that Israel will not build any new settlements, and the government will not invest in the settlements. He made the statement in a letter to UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali, which was in reaction to the PLO observer's demand that the Security Council urgently take up Israeli activities in the territories.

Demonstrators Clash With Soldiers Near 'Aley Zahav

TA1101141195 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The residents of Kafr al-Dik in Samaria, who demonstrated this morning near the settlement of 'Aley Zahav, clashed with IDF [Israel Defense

Forces] soldiers and pelted them with rocks. A cameraman was slightly injured in the head by a stone. Our correspondent Dani Zaqen reports that the soldiers retaliated with concussion grenades and, according to the Palestinians, fired their guns. The demonstrators are returning to their village at this time.

Our correspondent notes that the residents of Kafr al-Dik claim that the new industrial zone near the settlement of 'Aley Zahav was built on land they own.

Settlers Build West Bank Road at Own Expense

TA1201111595 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Settlers have built a 2-km-long road connecting the settlement of Shvut Rahel in the Binyamin region to the Alon road. Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that bulldozers and experts hired by the Mate Binyamin Local Council built the road at a cost of some 0.5 million shekels. Work was completed some two weeks ago without the army's knowledge and without any opposition from Arab villagers in the region.

'Terrorist' Youth Killed in Gaza Blast

TA1201111395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Muhammad Abu-Tahir, a 15-year-old youth from Khan Yunus, was killed and two children aged nine and eight were injured in an explosion near the old Kissufim roadblock between Israel and the Gaza Strip. Our correspondent Nisim Qeynan reports that the youth killed is a terrorist who was carrying the charge on his body when it exploded.

The Palestinian police, however, told our correspondent Dani Zaqen that the boys found an old road mine and that it exploded when they were playing with it.

Rabin's Relations With Cabinet Members Viewed

TA0601195595 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (SHABAT supplement) in Hebrew 6 Jan 95 pp 2, 3

[Article by Shalom Yerushalmi: "Rabin Increasingly Getting Into a Jam"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At the end of a frantic day of deliberations last Monday [2 January], the ministers felt triumphant about Yitzhaq Rabin's decision to freeze construction on Hatamar Hill and to set up a ministerial committee to deal with the land crisis in Efrat. They underlined the decision, as if it were a turning point in the cabinet's decisionmaking process. It seemed to them that the prime minister, who until this week had behaved in a condescending manner, ignored the ministers and Knesset members [MK], and treated the people surrounding him as film extras, had at long last mended his ways and would henceforth consult his partners after putting the pertinent data at their disposal ahead of time.

Most of the ministers linked the change, if it indeed occurred, to the prime minister's cumulative weakness. To date Rabin did everything alone, but the latest intense events in the government and the Knesset shook his confidence. One failure followed the next, and his "I-will-lead" policy gradually vanished. In the latest two votes, on the information portfolio and the land in Efrat, Rabin had a hard time passing his decisions, and one minister (not a Meretz member) gladly announced that "arithmetically speaking he has a majority, but politically speaking he is in the minority." This reality, so they hope, will compel Rabin to take his colleagues into consideration. From now on the prime minister will know that he has a cabinet.

Two days ago, a senior minister described with unconcealed pride the recent events in the cabinet and the Knesset and how the ministers twisted Rabin's hand time after time. "Last Sunday morning we came to the cabinet session, and Rabin astonished us with the information portfolio and the appointment of Moshe Shahal. He said what he did, and then he called the session off. We spoke among ourselves and decided that the entire issue did not make sense. We went back to Rabin's office, spoke against the decision, and the end was that Shahal was forced to give up the portfolio. Rabin realized that he could have avoided the whole affair had he previously held consultations on the matter."

"Then," the minister continued, "there was the incident with the Knesset faction chairman. Labor ministers met last Wednesday evening, and MK Eli Dayan's objection to the budget was raised, just like that, without a teaching program, without alternative budgets, without anything. I thought to myself: If the government complies with his request, why should it not comply with all other requests? He had us by the throat. It was terrible. This time, too, if the cabinet had held prior discussions everything could have looked differently. For example, the government backed down on MK Ra'anan Kohen's draft law for benefits to discharged soldiers, but at least it did so elegantly and without having a crisis."

"Now comes the story of Efrat," the minister continues. "There was a land dispute there, but we, the ministers, knew absolutely nothing about it. There was a story with the committee's reviewing special building permits and permits that nobody knew for sure how they had been given. At the cabinet session Monday morning Rabin presented us with a draft resolution whereby 'the government takes note of the agreement with Yinon Ahiman, head of the Efrat council.' Did you ever hear of such a thing? The entire Israeli-Palestinian peace could succeed or fail over the settlements, but we must take note of some agreement between Shim'on Sheves and Ahiman on where the work will continue and where the army will be. We told Rabin: 'No way.' We are not taking any note. You take note. Ministers were not elected to be note takers of civil servants.

"Rabin saw that he did not have a majority for his morning proposal," the minister concludes his narration, "and he came back to us in the evening with a new one: to freeze construction on Hatamar Hill, allow work to continue on Hazayit Hill, and set up a ministerial committee to execute the resolution. In my view, that is an achievement. Rabin is no longer a chief of staff issuing orders to us. There is no more 'Sheves made an agreement—approve it,' 'I appointed a minister—approve it,' 'I decided on a capital gains tax—raise your hand in favor.' We showed him that such a situation could not go on. We forced Rabin to share with us and to make decisions the normal way. The concentration of power has been broken."

It is doubtful that such a ministerial monologue would have been uttered at the beginning of this government's tenure, when Rabin was at the peak of his power. Today the situation is different. There are numerous reasons for the weakness at the top, which has been corroborated by a few worrisome public opinion polls (the latest poll in Rabin's office shows Rabin lagging behind Netanyahu by 4 percent). This weakness has the political establishment worried, and to a large extent, it motivates the actions of the ministers and MK's. Rabin is no longer the winning horse who will lead his party to a sure victory in the next elections, as was once the case. On the contrary, the recent crises and hesitant behavior, particularly with regard to the capital gains tax, shattered the myth. Cabinet ministers today openly talk about the possibility (a desirable one from their point of view) of Rabin's not running in 1996 so as to avert a defeat similar to that experienced by former Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek. Until then, each of them was looking after his own future, ostensibly presenting independent positions, and in certain cases, building his own small power base, and shamelessly inciting opposition to the prime minister and the government.

With a touch of self-irony, ministers spoke this week about how they used to compete for proximity to Rabin and to proudly espouse his positions, even if they disagreed with them. All of it in order to give themselves a phony image of power and importance. Now that the situation has changed, entering Rabin's inner circle is not such a big deal, particularly if it involves personal trauma. One minister, who was always considered close to Rabin, says that "Rabin always works in a strange way. He has no good men. He has nobody to consult. When I call on him I never know whether he wants to hear me at all. This is yet another reason why every minister does the minimum necessary."

Staffers in Rabin's office are aware of the bitching against the boss in recent weeks, which has kept people away from him. Some even tried to plead with him to mend his ways and stop squabbling with every man and sector, but to no avail. Rabin does not want to see around him any of the ministers, most of whom he does not appreciate at all. They got the message and staged a rebellion on the information portfolio affair. The edgy atmosphere seeped into the Labor Knesset faction and led, among other things, to the Eli Dayan affair. MK Avraham Burg likened it to "a father slapping the eldest son, who then goes and slaps his kid brother."

Hence, the key word is rift: an exacerbating confidence crisis between Rabin and the ministers, among the ministers themselves, and between Rabin, the ministers and the Knesset (all of which depend on a party that became shaky and impoverished after Hayim Ramon deprived it of funds and threw it into eternal insolvency). Rabin's hard and too independent 17-hour work days, his obsessive involvement in each and every issue and detail is what finally did him in.

A month ago we reported how Minister Moshe Shahal pulled Rabin by the sleeve and almost forced him out of a Knesset faction session that was discussing an unimportant draft bill submitted by Likud MK Me'ir Shitrit. However, it turns out that Rabin did not change. As incredible as it may sound, two days ago, amid the Efrat crisis, the incidents with the Palestinians, and the budget problems, Rabin held a long meeting with members of "One Jerusalem," a Labor opposition faction in the Jerusalem City Council. "Rabin had no idea what we were talking about," admitted Hayim Kohen, the party secretary in Jerusalem who organized the meeting.

Confidants say that after Arye Der'i and Hayim Ramon quit the government Rabin was left without anybody capable of mediating between him and the people. That being the case, important issues are not dealt with on time; they collect dust until finally they become urgent and turn into fireballs exploding at Rabin's doorstep. Then, hasty solutions are found, and, to top it all, people say that Rabin is weak. The three crises in the last two weeks were all caused by neglect. The adviser-free Rabin was tempted at one point to offer (voters-free) MK Gonen Segev a ministerial portfolio. In order to fulfill his promise, the government had to fight no- confidence motions in the Knesset and in the High Court of Justice. Furthermore, Rabin was forced to usurp the energy portfolio from Moshe Shahal, one of his best ministers, and offer him an artificial information portfolio after he took a good beating from his rebelling ministers. In the end, and after a big disgrace, Shahal gave up the portfolio. [passage omitted]

Now, in the wake of the recent blows sustained by the government, the ministers hope that the situation will change. Justice Minister David Liba'i stated this week that henceforth the decisionmaking process in the cabinet will change, "the ministers will share the decisions and stop being a rubber stamp." Tourism Minister 'Uzi Bar'am made his own optimistic assessment: "The last two weeks of the information portfolio, MK Eli Dayan, and Efrat could be a lethal combination, but we are lucky that everything is happening one and a half years before the elections. I am worried about Rabin's declining power. This weakening does good to nobody, including the prime minister's opponents. This is the time to change direction. I hope some ministers will try to pull the party together rather than split it up. This is our only chance to compete with Binyamin Netanyahu.

[Yerushalmi] Do you include Rabin among those ministers?

[Bar'am] Yes. Rabin is Rabin, but the cabinet ministers also need leadership. [passage omitted]

Jordanian-Israeli Water Committee Meets in Tiberias

JN1101201895 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The joint Jordanian-Israeli water committee held a meeting in Tiberias yesterday. During this meeting, the committee continued its discussion of the peace treaty provisions related to water.

For more details on the issue, engineer Qusayy Qutayshat, secretary general of the Water Authority and head of the Jordanian delegation to the talks, spoke to our radio, saying:

[Begin Qutayshat recording] This meeting was the fifth meeting of the joint water committee, which is addressing the peace treaty provisions related to water. The relevant terms of reference the Jordanian side has submitted to the Israeli side have been debated. These terms of reference concern construction projects, such as the diversion dam project to be implemented in the al-'Adasiyah area, and other dam projects on the River Jordan. Moreover, the issue pertaining to wells in Wadi al-'Arabah has been discussed. These projects, chief among which is the project regarding the construction of a water pipeline from Israel to the King 'Abdallah Canal, have been prioritized. This project is designed to supply Jordan with 20 million cubic meters of water per year. Thank you. [end recording]

Postal Services With Israel, Self-Rule Areas To Begin

JN1201134295 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 12-13 Dec 95 pp 1, 15

[Report by 'Imad 'Abd-al-Rahman]

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible government source has said that direct postal services with both Israel and the self-rule areas will begin very soon. The source added: These services are expected to begin within the next ten days.

In statements to AL-ASWAQ, the source said that postal services between Jordan and both Israel and the self-rule areas will be carried out directly through the border crossings. Post offices will be opened at the Shaykh Husayn Bridge border crossing, the Wadi al-'Arabah border crossing, and the other border crossings. The source added that airmail will be exchanged after agreements are reached on the altitudes at which airlines can fly between the two countries, as committees on civil aviation are currently discussing this issue.

The source noted that the date for starting postal services between Jordan and both Israel and the self-rule areas will be announced all at once. It added that after lengthy talks between the two countries, final technical and administrative touches are now expected to be finalized .

On another point, the source said that postal services between Jordan the self-rule areas has not started yet, although postal services between the self-rule areas and the rest of the world have already begun.

The source explained that this is because there are no direct borders between Jordan and the self-rule areas. It is well known that parcels from the self-rule areas are sent out through the Israeli Ministry of Communications, which uses its own planes and means of land and sea transport.

It is worth noting that the Jordanian and Israeli sides linked up direct telephone services late last year, right after the inauguration of the Wadi al-'Arabah border crossing.

Prime Minister Urges Cooperation With House

JN1101133095 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] We start the news with a statement by Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir in which he has underlined his government is looking forward to constructive cooperation with the legislature. He said through dialogue the government and parliament will discuss all issues of concern to the country and its stability.

Speaking during a House of Representatives session this morning, the prime minister, who assumed office three days ago, said the new era is in need of everyone's productive and serious efforts. Al-Sharif Bin-Shakir voiced full readiness to listen to all views based on his belief in political pluralism.

Dallul on Security Committee, Peace

NC1001100895 Beirut AL-SAFIR in Arabic 7 Jan 95 pp 3, 4

[Interview with Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul by Faysal Salman; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Salman] Let us begin with a topical issue, the [Joint Lebanese-U.S.] Security Committee. You, as defense minister, seem to be the last to know about this committee, with our apology for the use of this expression. We would like to hear from you the story of this committee and why you were distanced from it.

[Dallul] The idea of the committee began with diplomatic correspondence between Beirut and Washington. Lebanon had been calling for lifting the ban on American travel to the country, and it also concentrated on the subject of the Middle East Airlines' travel tickets. The Americans, for their part, said that security in Lebanon was not stable. We stressed that security was well maintained and that the American measures were unjust and wrong. The American Task Force delegation applied pressure in our favor. It was up to Lebanon to make sure security was maintained; it visited al-Biqa' and Ba'labakk. The delegation played a major role, proposing that the U.S. Administration discuss security at the airport. We received a message from the U.S. State Department calling for the formation of an expanded security delegation to visit Washington. Washington has the impression that Americans may not be safe in Lebanon. The Lebanese Foreign Ministry assumed this responsibility. For our part, we discussed the mission of the security delegation, whose agenda has been laid down. The delegation's travel to Washington was contingent upon the Americans accepting this agenda. [passage omitted]

[Salman] Certain political forces in Lebanon have announced their rejection of the committee. Some say the committee is useless, that it will not achieve any results, and that Lebanon will uselessly spend a lot of money. Others points to the political dimension of the committee, expressing fear about the American conditions—if we may say so—regarding security on the sides of the airport road and around the hotels where the Americans will stay. The latter group includes Hizballah. As a defense minister, have you held contacts with Hizballah to ensure enough guarantees?

[Dallul] I believe the issue is not the amount of money we will spend; what matters is our work to serve our policy and the policy that serves our objective. We will not retreat from our position, but at the same time we want to provide the American Task Force team, which is of Lebanese origin, and the Arabs in the United States with the necessary cards so that they can support us. All of us should work toward a certain objective: how to liberate our occupied land and strengthen our internal situation to support the liberation of land, not to make it a burden on those working for the liberation. This is the logic of life and things. So, the issue is not one of expenses, but of a delegation that has an agenda agreed upon in advance, and instructions that it should withdraw in case of any departure from this agenda. By this, we will be giving cards to those who support us, those of Lebanese origin who visited all regions, who wrote in U.S. newspapers, held meetings at the U.S. Foreign Trade Department, and told the American companies that they are losing business in Lebanon. I am interested in supporting this group, which is spreading this message through American newspapers in support for Lebanon. What is important is that I should not relinquish my rights or do anything that may harm my cause. Contacts were held with all sides. It is not I who answered their answers, but members of the security committee themselves. They explained their mission, which is very clear. Ambassador Tabbarah took the agenda with him to present it to the American side.

[Salman] Regarding relations with the United States, and in your capacity as defense minister, why hasn't the United States augmented its aid to the Lebanese Army? The Lebanese Army has made achievements on the security level, achievements that are clear to everyone. While the United States is calling for better security for its nationals in Lebanon, it does not increase its military aid to that country.

[Dallul] Naturally, Israel has its own policy and course, so does the United States. I do not want to discuss whether the United States hesitated or refused to offer aid. This is not the end of the world. Through our own resources we succeeded in providing the Army with equipment. We purchased equipment from the United States at low prices. We also purchased weapons from the Allied armies in Germany at token prices. We will take a long qualitative step this year and purchase a number of helicopters within three months. As for why the United States has failed to offer us aid, I believe that the United States has goals and purposes that are not far from those of Israel. The United States wants us to attend the multilateral talks. It is upset because Lebanon and Syria refused to attend these meetings. The United States wants us to confront the resistance men and give a timetable for their withdrawal. It knows that it is impossible for us to confront the resistance, which is playing a major patriotic role. There is no room for preventing the resistance operations before Israel withdraws from our land. It is only natural that the Americans should put pressure on us, but we must face the realities. There is also Western pressure, for how can we explain the interference in the fund in support of Lebanon, which is an Arab-international fund on which national accord in Lebanon relies? Why has the Arab and international aid stopped? Shall we stop the wheel of peace, of social peace in Lebanon and the progress of the Lebanese Army because we failed to secure aid? Of course not. We have provided the Army with jeep vehicles, which we purchased from Germany at a low price. We fixed and overhauled these vehicles as we did the various types of weapons we obtained.

[Salman] We gather that you do not protest the way the Security Committee was formed or its tasks as outlined in the agenda?

[Dallul] According to the agenda, the committee is useful. Regarding its formation, they asked us to choose the members. We declared our confidence in the Army's director of operations as he represents the military security agencies in the Army and is capable of playing this role successfully and competently.

[Salman] This means that later you will not be able to protest?

[Dallul] At the beginning the interior minister and I were unaware of this issue because of its connection with diplomatic channels. But earlier, I read a certain letter by the foreign minister after which we were called to attend the meetings.

[Salman] Do you expect the Security Committee to hold more than four meetings?

[Dallul] If the agenda we prepared is approved, we fear nothing. We trust our agencies. We always tend to entertain fears and pessimism. We must act cautiously away from pessimism. We trust our agencies, which have representatives headed by high- ranking and competent officers who will act according to specific instructions outlined in the agenda.

[Salman] One aspect of the tasks of the committee as set forth by the U.S. party shows reservations about certain employees in Middle East Airlines and accuses them of having connections with Hizballah. It seems as if the U.S. party is seeking to have them dismissed from their jobs so that it can be reassured. The transport minister expressed a stance opposed to this approach.

[Dallul] This approach is rejected and we have not been informed about it. We reject this approach because whatever an employee's affiliation, he cannot be dismissed as long as he does his duty. In the 'Umar Karami cabinet, we rejected financial and economic custodianship because it would harm our situation. Today we reject this approach from the premise of rejecting any conditions, particularly regarding liberation of our land.

[Salman] What is your view of Minister Misqawi's stance on the committee?

[Dallul] What did he say?

[Salman] He said he disapproves of it.

[Dallul] The issue of the airport is political.

[Salman] What do the Americans fear then?

[Dallul] It is a political rather than a security situation. To punish us, they want us to work according to their will, since they are the only superpower in the world. They want, first, to separate the Lebanese track from the Syrian, so that they can deal with each of us "independently." Second, they want us to challenge the resistance before the Israelis withdraw from our land. If we refuse to do that, they will punish us. Would you imagine that they lose in travel tickets and cause us to lose. The same thing happens in business. The point is we must not be affected by this punishment. So far, we have not. The Middle East Airlines might have suffered a bit. But, generally speaking, the country has not been affected by this punishment. They are losing more than we are as a result. [passage omitted]

[Salman] What is the position on Antoine Lahd's men?

[Dallul] We have assumed a clear-cut position: We have dismissed them. I do not think that any of them are in the Lebanese Army. Some deputies inquired about the issue in the Chamber of Deputies and we explained our position. Basically, we conducted a check to make sure; we substituted a battalion for another. Whoever failed to join was dismissed.

[Salman] Will those persons be tried after the Israeli withdrawal?

[Dallul] Certainly. Whoever deals with the enemy is an agent and is supposed to stand trial. A series of contacts were held about the destiny of these persons a while ago. We said that they would be jailed. We did not bargain. They tried to wrestle a promise from us to consider their case, but we firmly said that they were agents and that their trial is unavoidable. [passage omitted]

[Salman] Do you believe that 1995 will bring anything new as far as negotiations are concerned?

[Dallul] If it does not bring something new and positive, it might bring something negative.

[Salman] In what sense?

[Dallul] Israel will conduct sabotage operations and the resistance will retaliate. We are with the resistance. Some positions will change.

[Salman] Do you think that the progress achieved on the Syrian track will reflect positively on the Lebanese?

[Dallul] Any progress on the Syrian track reflects positively on the Lebanese, and vice versa. We have said more than once that there is an attempt to separate the two tracks and to surround Syria through striking at Lebanon. There is an attempt to deal with each independently. We are supposed to have a consensus on that position to avoid falling into the trap Israel is preparing for us. Israel succeeded in separating the Palestinian track from the other Arab tracks. It then separated the Jordanian track from the Syrian and Lebanese. We have to cooperate further to deny Israel this opportunity.

[Salman] How do you evaluate General Hikmat al-Shihabi's participation in negotiations, or in the agreed formula?

[Dallul] I believe that President al-Asad has made a great achievement and proved that he is a real leader. Israel thought that it would embarrass him and evade negotiations. But President al-Asad's maneuver was brilliant. He decided to let General al-Shihabi attend negotiations. His presence means that he would talk about the Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and not about the principle of negotiating.

Then came the Alexandria summit, which provided the backing for Lebanon and Syria. It was meant to prevent Arabs from falling into Israel's arms. It was indeed an important summit meeting. My assessment is that it was a great stance through which the Syrian leadership wanted to achieve a great deal.

Al-Hariri: Israeli Domination Contrary to Peace

NC1101082595 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri announced that Lebanon would benefit from a comprehensive peace. He noted that if Israel wishes to live like the rest of this region's countries, then peace will be within reach for all the concerned parties.

He added: If Israel wishes to dominate the other countries, then peace will be difficult to attain. Lebanon will benefit from peace if it is comprehensive and just. Hopefully we will attain such a peace with the assistance of the brothers and the world community.

Al-Hariri made these remarks during a reception he gave to the Arab ambassadors in Lebanon led by their dean, the Libyan envoy 'Ashur al-Furtas. [passage omitted]

IDF Reportedly Kills 4 'Terrorists' in South

TA1101153495 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Here is an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] announcement: Four terrorists were killed this afternoon in a clash with an IDF unit in the western sector of the security zone in south Lebanon. One IDF soldier was slightly wounded in the clash and taken to hospital for treatment. Here is our correspondent in the north Menahem Horowitz with more details:

[Begin Horowitz recording] This afternoon, an IDF unit on a routine patrol near the village of Kunin, in the western sector of the security zone, came across a terrorist squad. Fire was exchanged with the terrorists, who hid amid the houses of the almost deserted village. An IDF soldier was injured, treated on the spot, and later taken by helicopter to Rambam Hospital in Haifa.

The IDF soldiers quickly recovered and attacked the terrorists. A few minutes ago, it was reported that four terrorists were killed in the ensuing chase, which took place among the deserted houses of the village of Kunin and the township of Bra'shit, north of the area of the clash. Shortly afterwards, Air Force jets attacked terrorist targets north of the security zone.

Fire exchanges in south Lebanon resumed this afternoon, this time in the eastern sector of the security zone. One SLA [South Lebanese Army] soldier was very slightly injured. [end recording]

[Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1300 on 11 January transmits a 180-word report adding that the IDF and the SLA are using tanks and mortars to shell targets north of the western sector of the security zone. The terrorists are firing back at the areas of Bayt Yahun, Haddathah, and Bra'shit. Lebanese sources report that one terrorist was killed in the clashes.]

Israeli Settlement Activity, 'Racist' Laws Assailed

JN1101125595 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic
4 Jan 95 p 3

["With the Events" column by Jibarah al-Barghuthi: "The Nazism of Israeli Laws"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Supreme Court in Israel has disclosed a valid Israeli law considering any land trodden by the Israeli Army soldiers an Israeli territory and considering the Arab inhabitants temporary leaseholders of this land. It was also revealed that this law is taken verbatim from the law of the racist regime that existed in South Africa and from Hitler's Nazi rule during World War II.

Furthermore, the Zionist occupation authorities consider any rocky terrain, woodland, or abandoned land whose owners are absent to be the property of the Israeli Army, which it may give away to the immigrant Jews who come from all over the world to Palestine.

According to its racist laws, the Israeli Government considers all settlement movements and organizations—such as Gush Emmunim, Kakh, and others—to be charitable organizations that could be given any territory under the authority of the Israeli occupation Army.

In line with these racist laws and concepts, Rabin told the Knesset yesterday that settlement activity is one of the most important rights of Jews inside and outside Israel. This is why Rabin did not reverse the confiscation of the land of the Arab village of al-Khidr. Rather, he moved settlement work from one area to an adjacent one called Jabal al-Zaytun.

Rabin gave the West Bank and Gaza Strip territories the name of the land of Israel and considered Arab presence on these territories a temporary one, while maintaining that the immigration of Jews to Palestine is one of the objectives for which the State of Israel was established.

This immersion in falsehood is taking place in the aftermath of what others called peace agreements with Israel. What have these agreements achieved, when the Palestinian people are suffering in their land and country and are afflicted with submissive leaders who gave Israel everything and got nothing in return?

Well, the facts speak for themselves. The Israeli soldiers have killed four young Palestinian policemen in Gaza while some of them were asleep and the others were busy eating. The Israeli soldiers are guarding the settlements by using the police of the self-rule authority. Only yesterday, Israeli troops stormed the town of Bayt Hanun in the Gaza Strip without any resistance because the orders given to the Palestinian police allow the Israelis to kill and arrest people and storm houses without any resistance.

What authority is that which they call a National Authority in Gaza and Jericho? What authority is that which buries its martyrs silently and asks for offering thanks to the generals of Israel because they did not kill more than four Palestinians in one attack? Those who falsify history are mistaken when they consider Israel's protection of their existence more important than the Palestinian people's right to their territory and homeland.

Paper Highlights Israel's 'Aggressive Intentions'

JN1101132295 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic
8 Jan 95 p 1

[Unattributed editorial: "Israel's Generals and the Dangerous Calculations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli leaders are looking for pretexts to make peace in the region a neglected issue and block the road to it. It is difficult for the leaders of Israel to understand history. Therefore, they persist with the same arrogance that made the entire world oppose Hitlerism.

The doves and hawks in Israel have completed the distribution of roles among themselves and have shown malicious aggressive intentions. They want peace but without withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. They support regional security but without pledging not to possess destructive nuclear weapons. They support human rights on condition the recipient is neither Arab nor Muslim. This recipient, in the eyes of the Israeli leaders, should not be allowed even to breathe fresh air and should not find anyone to defend him.

The Arabs should not be the only ones to be asked to implement UN resolutions and international initiatives so long as Israel rejects UN Resolutions and what the world had agreed on at the Madrid conference. When Rabin rules out withdrawal from the Golan Heights and Peres voices surprise at what he calls the intransigence of the Syrian stand, this clearly shows that the Israeli leaders, perhaps, have regretted some of their statements supporting peace and which they made at the time to deceive world public opinion.

Those who monitor Israel's moves notice that Israel prepares for military actions in some Middle East areas to promote a pretext that will absolve it of even the agreements it had reached with some Arabs.

Israel's preconditions and the scorn it shows for all Arabs also exacerbate tension in the region and render it more vulnerable to setbacks with unforeseen consequences.

Since the Israeli practices conflict with the peace requirements, we believe that what the Israelis have been so happy to achieve will not last as it is simply a settlement between a party which has forsaken its rights and a party which imposed its injustice through deception.

Therefore, the impasse in the region continues, and it is no wonder that Israel turns this impasse into a disaster as its generals have developed Nazi-like feelings. The result is that injustice will not last, and the oppressor will inevitably be taken to account by those whom he has harmed and whose existence he has scorned.

Self-Rule Authority Said Involved in Israeli 'Crimes'

JN1101135995 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic
8 Jan 95 p 3

["With the Events" column by Ilyas Khuri: "Israeli Terrorism in the Occupied Territories"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The savage campaign of repression and liquidation which the Israeli occupation authorities are launching in the occupied West Bank cannot be separated from the covert or overt articles of the self-rule agreement. Israel has officially acknowledged this campaign which resulted in the assassination of seven resistance cadres in the West Bank on Tuesday and Wednesday [3 and 4 January]. In one way or another, this campaign can be regarded as the other face of the self-rule agreement.

The Israeli Army troops tried to justify this campaign as being a reply to the escalating resistance operations. In the past few months, these operations constituted a qualitative step in confronting the Israeli terrorism and emphasizing that the Palestinian masses are determined to continue their struggle against occupation. However, one cannot ignore the fact that the Oslo agreement as well as the continued and complicated negotiations between the self-rule authority and the Rabin government provide for joint cooperation in resisting what they call "terrorism," knowing that this word is confined to the Palestinian resistance operations.

The word terrorism also deliberately ignores the organized and official terrorism which is pursued by both the Israeli troops and the herds of Zionist settlers in the occupied Arab territories, whether in terms of repressing, killing, and arresting the intifadah cadres or confiscating the Arab lands, expelling their Palestinian owners, and replacing them with settlers.

The Oslo agreement has given a free hand to the Israeli Army in the occupied territories. It has also made it incumbent on the self-rule authority to repress and liquidate the Palestinian forces which oppose the liquidationist solutions and commit themselves to the continued fighting against occupation until all the occupied territories are liberated and a real national authority is established. Hence, the self-rule authority is involved in the Israeli crimes committed in the occupied territories, whether it acknowledges or denies this fact. This is so because the self-rule authority approved the Israeli concept to settle, or rather liquidate, the Palestine question and cut the Palestinian people's national rights down to a limited and disfigured self-rule.

Papers Comment on Rabin Government 'Threats'

JN1201112795 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 12 Jan 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: There is great difference between the peace process, which was accepted by the Arabs based on both the land-for-peace principle and Israel's withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines on the one hand, and the Rabin government's conduct in terms of distortion, circumvention of the peace process, and consecration of the Israeli mentality which is based on the tendencies toward expansion, aggression, creation of tense atmospheres, and keeping the region volatile, on the other.

AL-BA'TH adds: The Alexandria summit was held to foil all Israeli calculations designed to create an atmosphere of defeatism and deterioration. It also sought to caution against the poisonous Israeli bait being swallowed. Consequently, the Alexandria summit has begun to draw strong and resolute reactions in the region to end the collapsing Arab situation and curb the protracted Israeli intransigence.

AL-BA'TH believes that the Alexandria summit was the beginning of the Arab awakening which will return the Arabs to the world arena as a nation that does not kneel, that cannot be intimidated by threats or saber-rattling, and that cannot yield to any terms at the expense of its rights, existence, and fate.

The paper emphasizes that the Arabs, led by Syria, are eager to render the peace process a success. Syria still adheres to a clear and public position. It does not hastily seek a solution at any price, nor can it accept peace if it is not fair and comprehensive.

In its editorial, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: The Arabs, led by Syria, are looking forward to a just and comprehensive peace which will regain Arab territories and rights. They did not join the peace process to sell out their territories and bargain over their rights. The Arabs hoped that the international legitimacy would return their territories, preserve their rights, and achieve regional security and stability.

AL-THAWRAH cautions against the dangers posed by Israel's adherence to the maneuvering and deceptive methods designed to evade full withdrawal from the occupied Golan and southern Lebanon. This evasion will undermine the peace process and keep the region volatile. The paper demands the U.S. cosponsor to end Israel's intransigent policy which rejects the bases of the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH asserts that Israel cannot continue to publicize partial agreements as long as they are facing an impasse which is aggravating day after day. The paper stresses that the Arab situation will not remain as it is, now that the Alexandria summit has sounded the alarm and called for unleashing the capabilities and achieving solidarity which will protect rights of the Arab nation and secure its future. It also called for foiling the Zionist schemes which aim to finish off this nation and its resources.

The newspaper TISHRIN discusses Rabin's statements made yesterday and his public remarks that the Israeli forces will never withdraw to the 1967 lines. The paper says: Observers have interpreted these and the preceding statements as being threats to wage war and as a warning to the Arabs that they should accept the Israeli expansion into their territories, least they be subjected to a new large-scale aggression.

TISHRIN adds: The Israeli escalation in southern Lebanon is part of these threats, as is the intensive Israeli armament with sophisticated conventional weapons and nuclear arms, as well as the increasing Israeli war budget. All these signs indicate that the Rabin government is preparing for war.

The paper continues: This fact is best proved by the Rabin government's refusal to respond to the bases of a just and comprehensive peace, its rejection of full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon, and its public announcements on annexing Jerusalem and expanding the settlements.

TISHRIN believes that Israel, which pursues tricks and intransigence, wants the territories, its own security, and the economic hegemony over the region. It also wants to drag the Arabs into signing lame agreements that have nothing to do with peace. The paper also believes that it is natural for Syria and Lebanon to confront such aggressive plans, and for the Palestinians to rise and demand regaining their rights and territories. It is also natural for Israel's claims about peace to be refuted by Rabin himself.

PLO's Qaddumi Arrives in Damascus, Speaks

JN1101194595 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, arrived in Damascus today on a visit to Syria.

Qaddumi was received upon arrival at Damascus International Airport by Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, a number of Foreign Ministry officials, the PLO representative in Damascus, and members of the PLO mission.

In a statement to a SANA correspondent, Qaddumi expressed his appreciation and love for President Hafiz al-Asad and Syria's steadfast people. He said: I return to dear Damascus for which we harbor all love, and for the Syrian people and President Hafiz al-Asad all appreciation. He added: I have actually come here to discuss with the brothers in Syria the latest developments in the Middle East, particularly the peace process and the intransigent stands that obstruct the peace process and shatter the international community's hopes for establishing a just and lasting peace.

Qaddumi praised the mini summit that was recently held in Alexandria. He termed it a great ray of hope and a step down the road to reactivating joint Arab action and supporting the Arab League, which is the house of all Arabs.

He added: We view these issues positively, for Damascus, today, is the one that sponsors all these positive points. We want to share with Damascus these positive points which we hope will reflect on the Palestine question that Damascus considers its central cause.

Syrian-Kuwaiti Committee Concludes Meetings

JN1101182595 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1615 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The meetings of the Joint Syrian-Kuwaiti Committee were concluded at the Prime Ministry this morning. The talks were headed by Dr. Salim Yasin, Syrian deputy prime minister for economic affairs, and Nasir 'Abdallah al-Rawdan, second deputy prime minister and finance minister of the State of Kuwait, and were attended by delegations from the two countries. [passage omitted]

After reviewing the results of the committee's meeting, Dr. Salim Yasin and Nasir 'Abdallah al-Rawdan signed the joint minutes of the committee meeting in its third session in Damascus. A spirit of fraternity, amity, and mutual confidence prevailed at the meeting. During the meeting, the Kuwaiti side emphasized the importance of the Syrian role in the peace process and Kuwait's support for the efforts Syria is making toward reaching a comprehensive and just peace on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy and with the aim of realizing full withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan, south Lebanon, and the rest of the occupied Arab territories, and restoring all Arab rights.

The minutes of meeting also include the results reached on bilateral cooperation in the following fields:

Cooperation in the commercial field: The two sides discussed a number of economic and commercial issues that concern the two sisterly states in harmony with the decisions of the second session of the Joint Syrian-Kuwait Ministerial Committee that was held in Kuwait on 25-27 July 1994. They noted with satisfaction the steps adopted on fostering bilateral economic and commercial cooperation, and emphasized their joint desire to increase this cooperation.

They agreed on working for expanding bilateral trade exchanges and increasing the volume of this exchanges. They also agreed to ask various economic sectors to secure their requirements of goods from the products of the other country and extend all possible facilities for this objective. They also called for encouraging the creation of fairs and markets for joint national products in the two countries and extending necessary facilities for this purpose.

The minutes also included an agreement on cooperation in the investment and development fields. [passage omitted]

It was decided to convene the fourth session of the Joint Syrian- Kuwaiti Ministerial Committee in Kuwait next November.

Yasin and al-Rawdan signed an agreement on overland transportation of goods between the two countries with the aim of facilitating the transport of goods. [passage omitted]

Al-Rawdan left Damascus this afternoon at the end of a three-day visit to the Syrian Arab Republic. He was seen off at Damascus International Airport by Dr. Salim Yasin. [passage omitted]

Transit Accord Signed

LD1101192595 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1712 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, 11 Jan—Today, Kuwait and Syria signed an agreement regulating the transport of goods by land "transit." The agreement will by its nature develop the volume of trade exchange between the two countries.

The agreement was signed on the Kuwaiti side by Nasir al-Rawdan, second deputy prime minister and finance minister, and Salim Yasin, Syrian deputy prime minister for economic affairs, in the presence of the members of the two delegations and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Syria Ibrahim al-Musa.

Under the agreement, each side will allow the general haulage vehicles registered at the country of the other side to enter its territories laden with goods to delivered to unloading terminals. The entry of these vehicles must be through official entry points and must take fixed routes in its territory. They will not be allowed to enter the other side unladen to load goods from that side except by a special permit from the authorities of that country. [passage omitted]

Each side undertakes not to levy any duty on the transport of goods between or across the two countries. Vehicles will not be permitted to remain in the territory of either side for more than 20 hours. [passage omitted]

The agreement also calls for the formation of a committee that would meet routinely once a year composed of members from both sides and is charged with the task of regulating transport activities and solving problems arising from the implementation of the agreement. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan

Anti-Rabbani Alliance Announces Cease-Fire

LD1201092395 Tehran IRNA in English 0856 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan. 12, IRNA—Supreme Co-ordination Council, an alliance fighting against Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, have announced a week-long cease-fire, effecting Thursday [12 January], in Kabul to facilitate the efforts being made for the transfer of power in war-torn Afghanistan.

A spokesman for the council led by Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar told IRNA today that all routes leading to war-weary Kabul would remain open during the truce period. He hoped that the other side would show "sincerity" for the transfer of power in the country.

Rabbani's extended term in office expired on December 28 but he failed to quit as there had been no agreement between the rival groups on his successor.

Hekmatyar-led council has proposed the formation of an all party commission including National Islamic Movement of North led by Uzbek war lord General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam to take over power from Rabbani.

Rabbani has not accorded recognition to Dostam-led Northern Alliance.

Meanwhile, Dostam has urged U.N. special mission on Afghanistan Mahmoud Mestiri, currently on a visit to the region, to impress upon Rabbani's government to formally recognize his alliance otherwise peace could not be restored in the war-shattered country.

Security Chief: Conditions 'Appropriate' for Peace

LD1101172795 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad Shah Mas'ud [chairman, Kabul City Security Commission] told domestic and foreign correspondents that the present stage and conditions are more than any time appropriate for the realization of peace and stability in our country and that the maximum use should be made of these circumstances.

With regard to the statement of the state and the High State Council, which includes five jihadi groups, Mas'ud said: In political terms the state strategy is based on understanding, talks, and the solution of problems via peaceful talks and understanding. In military terms its based on a defensive doctrine. I am of the opinion that on the basis of the UN efforts and other peaceful efforts that have been conducted to resolve the Afghan problem and the positive changes that have arisen regarding friendly and neighborly countries, as well as in their policies concerning Afghanistan, that the time for a realization of peace and stability has arrived in our country.

Russian Jets Reportedly Raid Badakshan Village

LD1101170995 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1530 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source of Badakhshan Province reported today to the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY that the Russian aircraft heavily bombarded Mayni village, Darwaz district. As a result of this savage bombardment, 15 people in Mayni were martyred and over 30 were injured. In addition, heavy property damage was also inflicted on the village.

Bangladesh

Decision on Opposition Resignation Coming Soon

BK1201065995 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0130 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Speaker Sheikh Razak Ali has said a decision on the resignation letters submitted by the opposition MP's will be given as soon as possible. He said as the matter is very complicated and of high national importance—both constitutionally and legally, it ought to be more carefully and thoroughly examined.

By-Elections for Empty Parliament Seats Possible

BK1101144095 Dhaka DAINIK INQILAB in Bengali 4 Jan 95 p 1

[Report by Saiful Alam]

[FBIS Translated Text] Top leaders of the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party [BNP] are considering holding by-elections for the 147 vacant seats with a view to keeping the current political crisis within the jurisdiction of the Constitution. An influential member of the BNP standing committee told this correspondent yesterday that there is no alternative other than this to tackle the crisis created following the resignation of opposition MP's from the Parliament. We tried to find a political solution to this crisis, but it has not been possible due to the obstinacy of the opposition parties. At present whatever will be done will be in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. It has been learned that the future course of action will be determined at a meeting of the BNP standing committee to be held within the next two to four days.

On the other hand, the opposition MP's who resigned from Parliament have reiterated their demand for the holding of elections under a nonpartisan and neutral caretaker government as outlined by them in their declaration issued on 28 December. In this situation, the efforts which were made by several quarters during the past three to four days for forging an understanding between the two sides have failed as the opposition high command has rejected the move. There is no indecision or conflict among the opposition members on the issue of resignation. They are of the opinion that the resignation has been made in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and their decision is final. The Constitution has not given the right to anyone to give a ruling on this issue unless any member who had resigned does not bring any allegation regarding his own resignation letter. A responsible leader of the opposition parties told this correspondent that until yesterday none of the opposition MP's who resigned had brought any allegation to the Speaker. In reply to an accusation that opposition MP's who had resigned are still residing in the MP Hostel and are using government telephones, he said this is true in the case of some opposition members but they are taking preparations to vacate the hostel. He said there is no cause to worry that opposition members would stay in the hostel for a long time after their resignation. The opposition leader added that not a long time back some ministers who had resigned from the BNP stayed at their official residence and used government telephones. He added that there are also instances which shows that ministers who do not participate in any work of the government take salary and allowances, use government transport and staff, and other facilities.

Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali is sick and has been hospitalized. Owing to this, gazette notification of the resignation of opposition MP's is being delayed. The Election Commission cannot move to hold by-elections until the notification is issued. Before the Election Commission takes this move, the ruling BNP must decide whether it wants by-elections or fresh elections.

At the end of three successive days of half-day strikes today the opposition parties—the Awami League, the Jatiya Party, and the Jamaat-e-Islami—will announce their next program of movement from separate rallies. This program will include general strikes, blockades, rallies, and sit-in agitation. It has been learned that opposition parties are considering the announcement of a program of two days of strike and one day of blockade after the observance of Shab-i-Barat [Muslim festival]. Leaders who have been assigned to finalize the program of movement will meet this morning to accomplish this task.

India

U.S. Defense Secretary Perry Arrives in Delhi

'Landmark' Agreement Signed

BK1201100795 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and the United States today signed a landmark agreement to begin a new era of cooperation in defense. The agreement was signed after about 45 minute's delegation-level talks between the two sides in New Delhi today. The visiting U.S. defense secretary, Mr. William J. Perry, led the U.S. delegation, while the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, the Indian side.

The agreed minutes providing a framework of cooperation cover three key areas, including defense production and cooperation between the civilian and defense services. A joint technical group of senior professionals will be set up soon to expand the scope of cooperation in defense research and production activities. The two sides already have an arrangement on the light combat aircraft program launched by India. The agreement provides for a policy group consisting of senior officials in the defense departments of the two countries to review issues of joint concern including post-Cold War security planning. The group will also give policy guidance to the joint technical group. The two sides emphasized the need to increase service-to-service contacts. They agreed for the presence of observers at each other's military exercises and to take up joint exercises at a higher level of sophistication. The program for cooperation will be implemented by the three service headquarters in New Delhi and by the commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Command. The two sides also decided to begin early consultation for an agreement on the mutual protection of classified information. The minutes were signed by Mr. William J. Perry and the minister of state for defense, Mr. Mallikarjun.

Later, talking to newsmen, Mr. Perry and Mr. Chavan said the increased defense cooperation between India and the United States will make a positive contribution to the security and stability of Asia and promote international peace. Mr. Perry describing the agreement as historic said it is a first step toward achieving a closer and constructive security relationship. Mr. Chavan hoped that the agreement will give concrete results in the near future.

Earlier, on arrival at the airport in New Delhi, Mr. Perry said that the end of the Cold War has opened new opportunities for cooperation between the two countries. Though the two countries do not agree on every aspect, establishing of links will create a base for resolving differences.

The United States also proposes to set up an institutional framework to promote trade with India. This was stated by the U.S. commerce secretary, Mr. Ronald Brown, in Washington. Mr. Brown will arrive in New Delhi tomorrow on an eight-day visit. He said he visualizes the possibility of doubling U.S. exports to India in five years from $2.8 billion last year to $6 billion.

Party Criticizes Pact

BK1201130795 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] India and the United States have agreed to further expand defense cooperation. The agreed minutes providing for closer contacts between the defense ministries of the two countries were signed after an hour-long delegation-level talks in New Delhi today. The visiting U.S. defense secretary, Mr. William J. Perry, led the U.S. delegation and the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, the Indian side. [passage omitted]

Briefing newsmen, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said nuclear nonproliferation and missile issues did not figure during the discussions at the delegation level. During the discussions, the U.S. defense secretary said one of the objectives of his visit is to inform Indian leaders about his discussions in Russia, China and Pakistan.

The CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has expressed its reservation over the agreed minutes signed by India and the United States on defense cooperation. In a press release today, the party said this will have an adverse effect on India's foreign policy.

U.S. Interest in Country 'Increasing'

BK1201080095 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 12 Jan 95 p 8

[Editorial: "Perry's Other Agenda"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] No senior Clinton Administration official travels abroad these days without a bunch of commercial contracts in his/her pocket waiting to be signed. Striking new business deals for the US is also not one of the areas from which American voters expect their government to withdraw. So, when Mr William Perry comes calling this week, the first US Defence Secretary to visit India since the Cold War ended, he is sure to be burdened with representing a defence industry hit by government cutbacks but still managing to stay ahead of the rest of the world in arms and equipment exports. But important as it will be, the commercial aspect of deepening defence cooperation between India and the US is one of several objectives of the Perry visit. Related to commerce but of wider strategic interest for the US too will be trying to discover how far Indian defence planning is still interlocked with Russia. A new defence industry agreement signed during the Russian Prime Minister's recent trip to New Delhi is an attempt by both countries to rebuild their defence ties after several years of uncertainty. The US has been urging transparency in defence expenditure and doctrine as a means of confidence- building in regional context. This is a matter Mr Perry is likely to pursue in New Delhi, as he did not long ago in Beijing, for more than one reason.

For India the background of the Perry visit consists of changes in the post-Cold War scenario which allow for greater confidence in negotiating with America than hitherto. The US ought not to be seen narrowly as an interlocutor on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. (extending which unchanged is no longer going to be the walkover for Washington it once appeared to be) or the Missile Control Technology Regime. Nor should Kashmir or Pakistan loom overly large in the talks. Mr Perry can certainly be expected to make the appropriate noises on those accounts but there is obviously much more on Washington's mind. Following strains in the Atlantic alliance, dismay over developments in Russia and Central Asia and the emergence of China as an independent-minded economic power-house, there is increasing interest in building broader political relationships with regional powers such as India. There should therefore be less inhibitions about pursuing India's security and commercial-technological interests.

Iran

U.S. Seen Supporting Russian 'Crushing' of Chechens

LD1201115695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1052 GMT 12 Jan 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] As the crisis continues in Chechnya, there is a growing possibility that the scenario of the Bosnian crisis is taking shape in another corner of the former Communist bloc. The main scenarist behind this crisis is the United States, thanks to the collapse of its old rival. The U.S. stances toward these crises have demonstrated that America's only objective is to safeguard its own illegitimate interests. The best proof of this claim is the remarks made by U.S. Vice President Al Gore, in which he explicitly supported the Russian crushing of Muslims in Chechnya and continuation of the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims.

According to political experts, the White House realized some of its objectives of the cold-war era as a result of the disintegration of the former Soviet Union. However the consequences of this disintegration are creating new problems for the United States. These problems are worthy of evaluation since a new global ideology is taking shape against the West's hegemonistic ideology in the Muslim inhabited areas of the former Communist bloc. The fact that the White House statesmen are adopting contradictory stances in the face of various world crises proves that they are increasingly concerned about the growth of this global [Islamic] ideology.

By claiming to support human rights and democracy, the United States has always allowed itself to interfere in the most minor internal issues of world countries. It has even exploited this excuse in the past to invade smaller independent states.

The United States has not been neutral in the tragic developments of Chechnya. Rather, the hostile policies of the U.S. Government have gone as far as providing unconditional support for all the suppressive measures against the Chechen Muslims. Let us be honest: Would the United States have adopted such stances if there was no question of Islam in Chechnya and Bosnia?

Paper Condemns MKO Attendance at Syrian Conference

NC1201123195 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 27 Dec 94 p 2

[From the "Special Report" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Damascus has not reacted to Syria's invitation to elements of counterrevolutionary groups to participate in the conference of the International Union of Workers.

This conference was held in Damascus and was attended by three members of the fugitive Monafeqin [Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization, MKO] who alleged in their speeches that Iranian workers are being tortured and are deprived of their vocational rights.

Commenting on why the Monafeqin were invited to the conference Ibrahim al-Lawzah, one of the Syrian officials who helped organize the conference, said: "The Monafeqin attended the conference under the aegis of the United Nations." Commenting on why Iranian workers were not present at the conference, he added:

"Iranian workers do not have unions and their activities are within the framework of the 'House of Workers.' The International Union of Workers believes that the Islamic Republic's House of Workers is not an official body?!"

In answer to why the Iranian Embassy did not send a written protest to the Syrian Foreign Ministry, the Iranian charge d'affaires in Damascus said:

"This does not appear to be a very important issue, which would call for a protest note from the Islamic Republic's Embassy to the Syrian Foreign Ministry."

It should be noted that a few years ago, during the conference in support for the Palestinian nation in Iran, 'Isam al-'Attar, one of the leaders of Syria's Muslim Brotherhood, applied to the Islamic Republic's embassy in Vienna for a visa to Iran. He intended to participate in the said conference at his personal expense and using a German passport. But the officials at the Iranian Embassy in Damascus [as published] refused to grant him a visa on charges that he was against the Syrian Government.

Official Backs Egypt's Warning to Israel

LD1101214895 Tehran IRNA in English 2111 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 12, IRNA—Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mahammadi said here today that common positions of Muslim governments would help to solidify the position of Muslim nations in relation to the Zionist regime and would force the usurpers to retreat.

He referred to the observations Sunday [8 January] of the Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa about the menacing position of the Zionist regime earlier this week that Iran, Egypt and the rest of the Muslim nations have common position in relation to the dismantling of atomic weapons in the Middle East.

The Egyptian foreign minister on Sunday cautioned the Zionist regime against implications of attacking Iranian atomic installations and advised it to give up such an idea.

Mohammadi said Iran, Egypt and the rest of the Muslim world have perfectly cooperated at the international circles in relation to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, microbiolgocial and chemical wars.

He said, in other respects, the more the Egyptian Government distances itself from the Zionist regime the closer it would obviously be to Islamic Iran.

Asked to comment on the negative foreign propoaganda that accuse Iran of being unconcerned about commitments on the non-proliferation agreement, he said such propaganda only speak for the fiasco of the Zionist circles in their hostile policies for smearing Iran internationally.

He said the 50-year experience of the West and East in their arms race should offer an exemplary lesson to those govenments that still cherish the wishful hope of military supremacy over other nations.

Asked to comment on Iran's help for solving the situation in the Caucasus republic of Chechnya, he said the Islamic republic would not hesitate to offer any humanitarian assistance which might halt the bloodshed in Chechnya.

He said the Russian Government had welcomed Iran's offer for help.

Problems Seen in Gaza-Jericho Accord

NC1201075495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 12 Jan 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Zionist regime's insistence on continuing its policy of building Jewish settlements and its opposition to the withdrawal of its forces from the autonomous regions have shrouded the fate of the Gaza-Jericho pact in ambiguity. The last round of talks, in Cairo, between Zionist regime and PLO representatives—talks aimed at finding a way out of the deadlock in implementing the pact—also ended without any results.

By continuing its policy of settlement-building, the Zionist regime is trying to alter the demographic picture on Jordan's West Bank to the benefit of the Jews. Under the Gaza-Jericho pact it accepted suspending the construction of Jewish settlements until it reaches an agreement on this with officials of the autonomous region, but it continues to implement this policy.

The Zionist regime and the PLO have also agreed that the Israeli forces should be withdrawn from the autonomous regions for elections to be held. But Israel is not withdrawing its forces, on the pretext of confronting terrorist attempts and of ensuring the security of the occupied territories.

PLO officials are trying to gain the Zionist regime's agreement to withdraw its forces from the autonomous regions and to pave the way for elections, which they regard as an instrument to acquire legitimacy. After the signing of the compromise agreement between the Zionist regime and the PLO and the opposition that emerged against 'Arafat and his supporters over the signing of the agreement, the legitimacy of these officials as representatives of Palestine was placed under question and the PLO's position among the Palestinians was weakened. Elections can help to mitigate this situation if the PLO's supporters succeed.

Noting the Zionist regime's insistence on continuing its policies and U.S. support for this regime, some experts believe that the failure to reach an agreement on implementing the other points of the Gaza-Jericho Accord will also see the authors of the pact failing in their efforts. So these experts foresee that the founders of the compromise process will strive to end the deadlock. But there are no hopes that this can be achieved quickly.

'Arafat's 'Sell-Out Deal' Will Bear No Fruit

LD1101122395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1058 GMT 11 Jan 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The prime minister of the Zionist regime Yitzhaq Rabin announced yesterday that he is against the idea of total withdrawal from the West Bank. The West Bank of the River Jordan is part of the eastern territory of Palestine, which was occupied by the Zionist regime during the 1346 [1967] war. On the basis of the Security Council resolutions, this area is considered occupied territory and the Zionist regime must withdraw from it unconditionally.

The Zionist regime, in the sell-out deal of self-rule for Gaza and Jericho, has pledged that 'Arafat will take control of all the West Bank region except the eastern quarter of Jerusalem, the fate of which is supposed to be discussed in future talks. However, the remarks made by the leaders of the Zionist regime, simultaneous with the failure of the umpteenth round of talks between 'Arafat and the representatives of this regime in Cairo and also the recent clashes between the Israeli army and 'Arafat's police, all indicate that the atmosphere of mistrust is growing between Tel Aviv and 'Arafat, and that the sell-out deal will bear no fruit. [passage omitted]

Thanks to the existing situation, many Palestinians in the occupied territories have come to the conclusion that what they have, in reality, gained some sort of freedom inside a prison, the boundaries of which are guarded by the Zionist regime forces. Political analysts believe that the sell-out deal is practically facing a gradual death, thanks to repeated violation of the Gaza- Jericho accord by the Zionist regime, expansion of new settlements in the occupied territories, and refusal of the Zionist forces to evacuate the occupied areas. In view of the fact that the Zionist regime has violated almost every article of the sell-out deal, the analysts believe that the Zionist regime, contrary to its peace-seeking slogans, is viewing the compromise with Arabs not as an end, but rather as a means that can assist this regime to promote its expansionist policies in the region particularly in the economic field.

Philippines Envoy Summoned Over Expulsion Incident

LD1101215295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the action taken by the Immigration Office of the Philippines concerning the expulsion of eight Iranian nationals and the hue and cry of several Philippine newspapers that then raised baseless and conspiratorial allegations against the Iranian nationals, the Philippine charge d'affaires was summoned to the Foreign Ministry on Wednesday [11 January]. The Islamic Republic of Iran's strong protest to the action and subsequent baseless allegations was conveyed at that time.

During the summon, the Foreign Ministry director-general for south and east Asian affairs criticized the hasty action taken by the Philippines authorities in not allowing our country's ambassador to Manila the opportunity to investigate the matter. He also pointed out the effects of such moves on bilateral relations.

The Philippines' charge d'affaires apologized for the incident and admitted to the wrong action taken by his country's immigration officials as well as to the misuse of the incident by a number of reporters. He said: The Philippines' foreign minister has expressed regret about the incident. He promised to convey the matter to his country's officials and return with the necessary reply.

Transport Agreement Signed With Bangladesh

LD1101182795 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran [IRI] and the Republic of Bangladesh signed a memorandum of understanding and determined the cooperation framework between the two countries. Our correspondent reports:

[Correspondent] On the basis of memorandum of understanding that was signed this afternoon by Mr. Akbar Torkan, our country's minister of roads and transport, and Mr. Oli Ahmed, Bangladesh's minister of communication [name and title as received], ways of cooperation between the two countries' in the field of transport were specified.

[Begin Torkan recording] This memorandum of understanding is stressing on the signing of a marine transport agreement, and also cooperation between the two countries' railroads.

Bangladesh has purchased 66 railroad wagons from the IRI. It was agreed that the IRI will repair 100 locomotives for Bangladesh. We will exchange experts with each other. We will cooperate in education spheres. These are the contents of this memorandum. [end recording]

[Correspondent] Following the signing of the memorandum of understanding, Mr Oli Ahmed left Tehran for his country and was seen off officially by Mr. Torkan.

Moldova Accord Covers Petroleum Sale, Development

LD1101194895 Tehran IRNA in English 1914 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 11, (IRNA)—An agreement was signed here today between Iran's Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i and economic minster of the Republic of Moldova, Valeriu Bobutac, for sale of Iranian oil.

The Moldovan minister proposed that Iran offer help to his republic in the area of prospecting for oil, building an oil terminal in southern Moldova and an oil refinery.

He expressed hope that big strides would be taken for closer relations between the two countries.

Aqazadeh welcomed suggestions for closer relations and said a feasibility study on the proposal of the Moldovan official would have to be done before making a final decision. He agreed to arrange for that study by Iranian experts.

Guardian Council Urges Satellite Bill Amendment

LD1101142895 Tehran IRNA in English 1412 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 11, IRNA—The Council of Guardians on Wednesday [11 January] asked the Majlis (parliament) to amend some parts of a bill it approved on January 4 banning the use of satellite dishes, because of their inconsistency with the Constitution.

The Council which is responsible for endorsing all laws passed by the Majlis found article 2 and article 3 of the bill as not being in conformity with the Constitution because of their costs to the goverment.

According to article two of the bill, the Interior Ministry is required to remove satellite dishes and equipment as soon as possible using Law Enforcement and volunteer forces. The article 3 calls on the Interior Ministry in coordination with the Information [Intelligence] Ministry to prevent import and distribution of satellite dishes and equipment and to bring to justice those involved in this business.

Presidential Visit, New Developments in Provinces

Wind-Activated Power Plant To Operate

LD1101204095 Tehran IRNA in English 1855 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 11, (IRNA)—A second wind-activated power plant in Iran is to operate in Roudbar, Gilan Province next week.

Director of the Center for National Projects for Feasibility Studies and Research on Novel Energy Resources 'Ali-Mohammad Ahmadi said here today that the first wind-activated power plant that started operation in Manjil, about 10 kilometers south of Roudbar two weeks ago, produces more than 100 mega watts of power per hour, the highest output [words indistinct] activated power plants in the world.

He said the new energy resources section of the atomic energy organization of Iran is very active in the area of research. He added a proposed project of the center is to build a power plant with a rated capacity of 150 mega watts per hour during the second national development plan to go into effect March 21.

Ahmadi said among the particular advantages of those plants are their immediate output capability, protection of the environment and their consistency.

Drugs Cause of Baluchestan 'Backwardness'

LD1101181395 Tehran IRNA in English 1715 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Zahedan, Sistan-Baluchestan Prov., Jan. 11, (IRNA)—President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani here Wednesday [11 January] said that insecurity and drug trafficking in this southeastern province under the past regime were the root causes of the region's backwardness.

Speaking in the flag hoisting ceremony of the Army and the IRGC [Islamic Revolution Guard Corps] here, the president added that thanks to the Islamic revolution and vigorous efforts of the law enforcement forces these social problems have been eradicated to a large extent.

In light of security in the region giant infrastructural and development projects are being implemented, Hojatoleslam Rafsanjani said.

Referring to comprehensive support of the arrogant powers for drug traffickers and bandits, the president said that the administration's success in countering internal and foreign enemies is owed to powerful presence of armed forces and Iranian nation in all arenas.

Lauding efforts of armed forces, the president said that the Iranian nation highly value the service of the armed forces and supports them wholeheartedly.

He said that the huge number of mourners attending the funeral service of the Air Force commanders, recently martyred in a plane crash, shows the deep respect of the nation for the armed forces personnel.

On the second day of his tour of the province, President Rafsanjani and the accompanying delegation inspected two huge development projects including a farming and afforestation project near Zabol in this southeastern province.

In continuation of his inspection tour, the president arrived in Zabol today and was accorded a warm and historic welcome by local people who were chanting slogans in support of the leader of the Islamic revolution, the president and the revolution.

Addressing a gathering of 500,000 people in Zabol, Hojatoleslam Rafsanjani said the government by channelling huge financial resources to the region and carrying out development projects is to turn Sistan and Baluchestan region into a prosperous area.

The president predicted that the region will be developed and enjoy high living standards by the end of the Second Five-Year Development Plan.

He underscored the need for reviving animal husbandry and handicraft industries, expansion of trade, setting up of border markets and implementing infrastructural projects in the region.

President Rafsanjani added that at present 300,000 hectares of land in Sistan is being rehabilitated by the construction Jihad, a move which will introduce great changes to the region.

Touching on strategical importance of the region, the president said it is one of main gates of the country.

Related news also indicated that in continuation of his visit to Zabol the president inspected the 224-bed hospital under construction in the city.

4 New Satellite Stations in Kermanshah

LD1201105995 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Four 5-watt ground satellite stations have been commissioned in the rural areas of Paveh and Eslamabad-e Gharb townships in the western province of Kermanshah. A number of villages, with a total population of 13,000, are now able to receive programs broadcast by the first network of the Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Technical experts from Kermanshah Province's Voice and Vision office carried out all the necessary work on the construction and installation of the stations, which cost 140 million rials.

At present, more than 90 percent of the province's population receive the programs of the television's first network, while 67 percent and 50 percent receive the second and third networks, respectively.

Rafsanjani Attends Council Meeting

NC1201082895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 12 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani attended the Sistan va Baluchestan provincial Administrative Council session last night. Expressing his gratitude for the enthusiastic and rare welcome he received and for the attendance of so many sincere and devoted people of the province, Hashemi-Rafsanjani described this as proof of the deep understanding and appreciation of the government's extensive development and cultural activities in this region as well of the existence of coordinated efforts and understanding among the people, officials, and provincial clergymen.

The Central News Unit reports that the president referred to this show of sincerity and unity between the Sunni and Shiite clergymen in Sistan va Baluchestan Province as a great blessing for the region's growth and development, and underlined the need to preserve and strengthen this coordination and unity.

Referring to the shortage of potable water in the province, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani stated: The projects for transferring water from the Hirmand River to Zahedan, thereby providing water to 800 deprived villages in the region; the construction of Zabol town's sewage network; and the expansion of pasture land and reclamation of desert land are costly and industrially complicated projects. However, because of their significance to the region's development, the government is determined to extend the necessary credits and to use domestic resources to complete these projects by the end of the Second Development Plan.

Explaining the government's economic policies and the strengthening of the country's infrastructure, the president stated: We are not worried at all about the future of the Islamic system and we consider the country's economy to be promising in all aspects. He added: We hope that by relying on God, and with the directives of the esteemed leader, the support and devotion of the country's sincere, revolutionary people, and with the efforts of the devoted officials we will be able to successfully and proudly build this country of the Imam of the Ages—may God hasten his advent—in a worthy manner.

Pakistan

Reaction to Defense Secretary Perry's Visit

Media Roundup

BK1201094095

[FBIS Editorial Report] U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry continued his visit to Pakistan on 11 January. Discussing her 10 January meeting with Perry, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto stated "we welcomed the U.S. interest in promoting peace and security in South Asia," and added that "Pakistan has made it clear that the United States should adopt a uniform policy on Pakistan and India." [Islamabad Radio in Urdu] Opposition politicians voiced their perception of U.S. policy in a meeting with Perry and noted "the U.S. was 'marginalising' Pakistan while it was showing warmth towards India." [Islamabad THE NEWS in English]

Follows a brief survey of commentary and editorials from media covered by Bangkok Bureau for 11 January: The newspapers questioned U.S. statements regarding a "more even-handed policy" in the region and also cautioned the government about its relations with the United States concerning the advancement of American interests.

Islamabad THE NATION in English published an editorial which noted "it is difficult to swallow uncritically the statements emanating from Washington of a more even-handed policy in the Subcontinent." The editorial said there was "little problem" with "the declared agenda of the Perry delegation, namely defence cooperation," however, it added that "it is difficult to envisage any other kind of defence cooperation." It concluded by questioning: "Would it not be prudent to consider very carefully whether it is in our interest to once again play the role of an American cat's paw, given the bitter experiences of the past, in which America has proved a fair weather friend?" The independent newspaper Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English published an editorial, which urged the U.S. to take actions that "must begin to conform to its professed resolve to be even-handed vis-a-vis Pakistan and India."

An article by retired General Khalid Mahmud Arif published in Karachi DAWN in English, a centrist newspaper, noted Perry is bringing to South Asia "'a new agenda' comprising three elements: peacekeeping, transparency, and confidence-building." The article stated that this "new agenda" was "like an old wine served in a new glass" and that "the bias was visible" even before the Perry delegation arrived in the country. It concluded: "If transparency be the goal, the U.S. policy of even-handedness should be no less transparent to the region." An editorial published by Karachi NAWA-I-WAQT in Urdu, a conservative independent newspaper, noted a "positive aspect" to Perry's visit, but questioned "what are the objectives and results of these contacts?" It urged the United States to "adopt a policy of live and let live. It should not try to foster a new kind of colonization under the guise of the new world order." Islamabad KHABRAIN in Urdu in its editorial urged Perry to "objectively and impartially assess and become fully aware" of the threats posed by India in the region and hoped that Perry, "through his word and deed, will prove the veracity of the tall claims being made by Washington about maintaining an even-handed approach toward India and Pakistan."

'Fine Print' Not Yet Clear

BK1201085795 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 12 Jan 95 p 7

[Article by D. Shah Khan: "Life After Perry's Visit"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Evidently the United States' Defence Secretary William Perry's visit to Pakistan has gone according to one of the possible scripts that may have been worked out for it. He came out with all the right cliches of friendship giving an impression that Pakistan has been allowed to re-enter its favourite pasturing ground again. In fact, some of the things the American visitor had to say during his meetings with the various pillars of the state must have been like music to Pakistani ears. These were sweet and treacly, flowing richly and giving a feeling of self-satisfaction to the planners of the country's foreign policy. To all those who may have been involved in sculpting a new linkage that would suit the changed times, the message that Dr Perry brought was a vindication of their strategy.

Although the fine print of the understanding that has been reached is not yet clear or will ever be made so, but on the surface the accord through a sort of Byzantine reasoning might make it possible for Pakistan to have a defence relationship with America. It will certainly not be in the league of the quasi-secret US-Pak defence pact of the 1950s or of the Cento [Central Treaty Organization] and Seato [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization] level; or even of the favoured nation treatment of Ziaul Haq days. But seen in context of the urgency in Islamabad to once again prove its utility to Washington, it is considered a step forward. In a way it signals the end of the period of aridity when our foreign policy experts were desperately looking for a durable patron, whom they could use as a be-all and end-all of their policy.

That America had always been the target was obvious as with the demise of the cold war there were no options left. The Soviet Union had disappeared and China was never into behaving like a great power, complete with a retinue of camp followers. Even a state like India, which had dressed itself in the khadi [type of Indian cloth] of non-alignment while it tacitly saw one superpower as more equal than the other, has joined in the queue for Washington's good graces.

Pakistan, like so many other countries, belongs to a generation which grew up from the infant days of independence to maturity in the shadow of one or the other superpower. Blocs, camps, groups, etc, were accepted fixtures which divided the world along fault lines that were far removed from the considered ideological identifications. Some of the greatest dictatorships which emerged after the second world war were ironically allied to the United States-led "free world". That Washington never saw any fallacy in this was not surprising, just as the Soviet Union counted among its friends known capitalists without a murmur.

With the global rivalry tending to split the world, Pakistan, like so many other states, were forced to join one or the other bloc as a pre-emptive exercise to maintain a balance within a different cold and occasionally hot war theatre that was influenced by the international cleavage. Other considerations were the wide variety of benefits that flowed from aligning with a superpower. With the United States, far richer than its rival, Pakistanis could look forward to a cascade of aid, which in the end had the effect of undermining the country's self-reliance.

The end of the cold war which resulted from Soviet Union's political suicide, not only finished the rivalry but replaced one threat which nations had learnt to live with by another danger. It was the unipolarity that emerged which is today dictating policies of most states which grew up in the gang culture. With no more polemical battles having to be waged for turf, these states have lost whatever little utility they enjoyed in American eyes. Pakistan saw its final hour as a strategic pawn when it became a surrogate to help America wage the "jehad" in Afghanistan. The moment the Soviets withdrew and the Union started its act of self-dissolution, Islamabad's loud boast of its great geo-strategic emplacement went by default. In recent times our best friends in Washington have taken to heaping almost every evil at our doorstep. Almost the entire spectrum of accusations has been covered, from a state aiding terrorism worldwide and in neighbouring areas, to Islamic fundamentalism, developing nuclear weapons and a major drug supplier. Probably, if the Americans played cricket, they would have added the charge of ball tampering as well.

Pakistan's return to the familiar grounds, possibly, was by force of habit or that in the somewhat barren political scenario, there were not many other viable options left. Even many of the former states which were once confirmed opponents of American hegemony are today on the best of terms with Washington. There are only a few hard line nations left like Cuba, Libya, Iran, Iraq, who are still out of the ambit of friends of America.

Even their numbers are dwindling with the People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) having signed an accord with the United States on its nuclear programme. Hanoi, the toughest opponent Washington had countered in its fight for the "free world", is today considered safe for investment.

Pakistan can probably exculpate itself of any charge of committing the same error twice by interpreting the revival of a tried and failed linkage as a changed perception. There was much the United States' Defence Secretary had to say of the recognition accorded to Pakistan's role as critically important in the global and regional strategic situation. It must have gone down well with a Foreign Office pining to hear such fulcome words of comfort. The Secretary, however, left unexplained the context within which they saw this country as critically important. Last time it was critically useful in bearing the white man's burden, regardless of the price it is still having to pay. This time, with the list of America's bogies having changed, the new critical use Pakistan may be put to might be even more disastrous.

Experience has taught us that superpowers rarely do an act of goodness without extracting a heavy price for it. Pakistan is still having to overcome the ill effects of its alliance, although America extracted all the benefit it could. Particularly the last command performance in the 1980s when our military leadership sold the country cheaply for acquiring a certificate of legitimacy, has caused the most damage. It is not known what we will have to do in the new close relations that are building up. That the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] and the Kashmir issue had somehow been purposely kept out of contention while the linkage was being hammered out, suggests that we might have a use that will transcend the known parameters.

It is this aspect that poses a problem as there is no certainty what the new task Pakistan will be required to undertake. The accent on peacekeeping by our forces could also be extended to mean acting in aid of states to keep peace. For quite some time, Pakistan was considered as a stand-by safety arrangement in case any of the Gulf states was troubled by internal disturbances. This notion was changed when America and its western allies took over the responsibility in the aftermath of Baghdad's blunder. But this still ensures a role for Pakistan as a camp-follower in areas where the US pioneers "peace keeping": in Somalia, and recently as policemen in Haiti.

Editorial Evaluates Results

BK1201090595 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 12 Jan 95 p 11

[Editorial: "Pak-US Deliberations"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Going by media reports regarding the deliberations held between the government of Pakistan and the high-powered delegation led by US Secretary of Defence William Perry it has become apparent that the US side has not come with much by way of initiatives to resolve issues of major concern to Pakistan in the near future. With regard to the revocation of the discriminatory Pressler Amendment, for instance, the US defence secretary has been reported as proposing, for the time being only, the revival of the Pak-US military group that had been constituted in 1984 and subsequently ceased functioning around the time that the Pressler Amendment took effect. Among other things this could, supposedly, provide a platform for helping the US sell the 38 F-16 aircraft that Pakistan has already paid for. Of course, it would be a major achievement if the group actually manages something of this kind. There is also the possibility of this platform enabling Pakistan to participate in joint military exercises and training. However, because of the Pressler Amendment and contrary to past practice, the expense involved will have to be borne by Pakistan. Similarly, while better coordination between the US and Pakistan with regard to peace-keeping duties in different parts of the world may help to strengthen the military bond between the two, it will not necessarily lead to any significant improvement in Pakistan's security environment that has been to an extent undermined because of the cessation of military and economic assistance after 1990 as a result of the Pressler Amendment.

On the key issues of Kashmir and Pakistan's nuclear policy Islamabad has apparently reiterated its previously stated positions. According to press reports Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has ruled out an approach that posits confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan with regard to contentious issues and areas other than Kashmir. She has made it clear that any such measures will have to be taken in the context of the Kashmir issue itself involving, for instance, the reduction of Indian troops strength in Kashmir and the repeal of draconian laws enforced to suppress the Kashmiris' struggle. And though it is not particularly encouraging that the US defence secretary has felt it necessary to, in effect, echo the British foreign secretary's observations regarding the need to end all kind of external interference in Kashmir, he has at the same time agreed to raise the issue of human rights violations in Kashmir at the hands of Indian security forces during the course of his visit to India. It does not, in any case, appear from his comments that the US is endorsing Britain's completely unacceptable formal position, as articulated by its foreign secretary, that the UN resolutions calling for a plebiscite in Kashmir are no longer of any value. Similarly, with regard to Pakistan's nuclear policy the government, it seems, has made it clear that the issue of curbing missile development and moving towards nuclear non-proliferation will have to be tackled on a regional basis and has once again proposed a five-nation conference to deal with the region's key security related issues. Again, Mr Perry has committed to take up some of these matters with the Indian authorities. But given India's stated position on most of these issues it is difficult to be optimistic about its response. The broader US goal, as enunciated by visiting defence secretary, to strengthen its defence relationship with both India and Pakistan and to treat both sides in an even-handed manner may yet enable it to bring the two closer together and to facilitate a process of conflict-resolution. But this is unlikely as long as India continues with its intransigence and is encouraged in its policies by a lukewarm response on the part of the international community, not least the United States.

Perry Assurances to Leaders Welcomed

BK1201123895 Islamabad KHABRAIN in Urdu 12 Jan 95 P 10

[Editorial: "The Talks: The Unity Between the Government and the Opposition, Assurances by the U.S. Secretary, But ..."]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry said that during his talks with Indian leaders in New Delhi, he will raise the issue of human rights violation by Indian troops in occupied Kashmir. During his talks with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the U.S. secretary also assured that the United States would pursue an even-handed policy with Pakistan and India. He said that Pakistan is an old friend of the United States and in the global context it attaches a great deal of importance to friendship with Pakistan.

The U.S. defense secretary held formal talks with his Pakistani counterpart, Aftab Shaban Mirani, in Islamabad on 10 January during which the nonsupply of U.S.

weapons and F-16 planes to Pakistan and the signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] in reference to Pakistan's nuclear program were also discussed. Ruling party members of the National Assembly and leading opposition figures also held talks with the U.S. defense secretary during a tea party at the U.S. ambassador's residence during which the parliament members apprised the U.S. secretary of Pakistan's stance on defense and security.

We instantly welcome the U.S. defense secretary's assurances to raise the issue of human rights violation in occupied Kashmir with Indian leaders and to adopt an even-handed approach toward Pakistan and India in the overall context of South Asia. From the very beginning, Pakistan had been complaining that the United States was not taking the situation in occupied Kashmir objectively and that it was not pursuing an even-handed policy with Pakistan and India in relation to various issues in South Asia. It is satisfying that an important official of the Clinton administration has now given assurance to the Pakistani prime minister on both the issues. However, we cannot resist saying that the United States had made some top-level assurances in the past as well, but practically, the U.S. strategy was motivated by short-term benefits. Although every country has the right to adopt a policy in the global context which conforms to its national interests, however, ignoring the pledges and assurances made to friends contradicts political ethics and international traditions. The credibility of the assurances made by the U.S. defense secretary on 10 January will be known within the next three or four days when he will be visiting India.

The Pakistani leaders have justifiably refused to sign the NPT until India does the same. They have clearly told the U.S. secretary that the United States should either supply the F-16 planes or return the money paid by Pakistan for them. The Pakistani leaders also made it clear that under the curtain of the Pressler Amendment, the United States gave India the opportunity to become a big military power. The prime minister was justified in telling the U.S. secretary in very categorical terms that the biggest threat to peace and stability in South Asia is the Kashmir dispute and without its solution the dream of peace in this region cannot be materialized.

We also express our satisfaction over the fact that during talks with the U.S. defense secretary, the ruling and opposition members of parliament clearly reaffirmed Pakistan's traditional stand on Kashmir and Pressler Amendment and told him that the amendment is a discriminatory law and the Pakistanis cannot expect justice from the United States as long as the amendment exists. The parliament members used sharp and bold language during the meeting. The U.S. defense secretary told the Pakistani MP's that his country is willing to implement programs of cooperation which are unaffected by the Pressler Amendment. This can also be construed to mean that the United States is now taking a defensive posture on the Pressler Amendment, while earlier the U.S. authorities would not give any importance to Pakistani criticism of the amendment.

It is very satisfying for patriotic circles that both the government and the opposition have adopted an identical and strong position on the Kashmir dispute, Pressler Amendment, and the NPT. The opposition MP's have undoubtedly made it clear to the U.S. defense secretary that there is no difference between the government and the opposition on issues relating to national defense and security. The behavior of opposition MP's is reflective of their patriotism and national spirit. This negates the claim of some government leaders that the opposition believes in the policy of opposition for the sake of opposition only and that they do not pay attention to anything else and even ignore national interests.

Editorial Chides UK's Hurd for Kashmir Remarks

BK1201051495 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 11 Jan 95 p 6

[Editorial: "Is He Fit To Represent London?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr. George Gallony, the British MP's condemnation of the British Foreign Secretary's somersault on Kashmir issue came at the right moment. Terming his statement as outrageous and ridiculous, Mr Gallony stated that the British Foreign Secretary's utterances amounted to a clear change in British policy on Kashmir, which he and his like minded colleagues would challenge in the House of Commons. Moreover, he stressed that Mr Hurd had ignored the ground realities in Kashmir where a reign of terror is being perpetuated by more than 600,000 Indian forces.

While welcoming these sane remarks, we cannot help reminding Mr Hurd that he has disgraced his nation which takes pride in its long democratic tradition of upholding the principles of justice and freedom. He has not only violated the sanctity of his country's pledges to help the people of Kashmir in the light of the accepted resolutions of the international community but also is guilty of bartering away the principle of self-determination for his debased financial policies towards India. Is he trying to revive the 19th century perception of Britain as a nation of shopkeepers which would go to any length for some immediate material gains or has he has been converted to an Indian side-kick for some ulterior motives? Brazen-facedly, he talked about the alleged foreign interference in Kashmir, he remained glued to the idea of some political process, and totally ignored the fact that UN resolutions do not become old simply because some myopic stuntman does not see his advantage in the implementation of these resolution.

We do not believe that Mr Hurd is ignorant of the fact that the present situation in Kashmir was a direct result of the same political process that India attempted to impose on the Valley. The voter turn up was not more than 3 percent and even the puppets pulled their strings from the moving fingers. We cannot understand why he insists on the foreign interference when Pakistan has repeatedly asked that UN observers be deployed on both sides of the Line of Control in sufficient numbers to monitor any movement that could be called interference? Why does not his mind accept the fact that the thousands of women and children who were killed during this Intifada were children of the soil asking for freedom? He should visit, if his gurus in

New Delhi allow him, Sohpur, Anant Nag and Srinagar to see the ravaged homes, mutilated bodies and burnt walls and then search his soul, if he has not sold it to someone, and find answers to the questions that the people of Valley ask from him.

It is indeed shameful and disparaging for a nation to have such an irresponsible and ignorant foreign minister—especially when that nation is an much a party to this problem as anyone else, when that nation is a signatory to the UN resolutions on this issue, and when that nation occupies a permanent seat in the security Council. Mr Douglas Hurd has molested every sacred ingredient in the collective consciousness of his nation not to speak of how badly he has damaged the just cause of the oppressed people of Kashmir. The irony is that after having said all that, he still insists that there has been no change in the British foreign policy on Kashmir. It seems he has not realised that Mountbatten is dead and the colonial period is over. He needs to grow out of his arrested view of South Asia and feel that almost half a century has passed and the world today is very different from what it used to be. Islamabad should not take his remarks lightly; they betray the traditional good relations between Britain and Pakistan and violate even that neutrality which ignorance demands. We would also suggest to the government of Mr Major to have his foreign minister examined whether he is fit to head the foreign office of a nation that is certainly much more informed about the Kashmir issue than Mr Hurd.

Ministers Meet Belarus Deputy Prime Minister

BK1101143995 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The visiting high-powered delegation of Belarus headed by Deputy Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikovich held a meeting with the federal minister for food, agriculture, and livestock, Nawab Mohammad Yusuf Talpur, in Islamabad today. The matters relating to the expansion of relations between the two countries in the socioeconomic, political, and diplomatic fields were discussed. The deputy prime minister of Belarus will sign an agreement for the supply of 12,000 tractors for Prime Minister's Awami [People's] Tractor Scheme for their distribution among the farmers at cheaper rates.

In Islamabad today, the deputy premier of Belarus, Mr. Myasnikovich, discussed with the minister of state for finance and economic affairs, Makhdum Shahabuddin, the ways and means to further promote economic relations between Pakistan and Belarus. Matters relating to the supply of Belarus tractors to Pakistan also came under discussion. Makhdum Shahabuddin informed Mr. Myasnikovich these tractors will be provided to small farmers.

Accord Reached With Kuwaiti Petroleum Firm

BK1101110395 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 10 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and the Pakistan State Oil have agreed to undertake joint ventures for setting up of a refinery in Pakistan which will be completed in the middle of 1999. An Expression of Intent to this effect was signed in Islamabad today. The Kuwaiti petroleum minister, Dr. 'Abd-al Muhsin Mid'aj al-'Mid'aj, and the federal minister for petroleum and natural resources, Mr. Anwar Saifullah, were also present at the signing ceremony.

Earlier, Kuwaiti delegation held talks with their Pakistani counterparts. Both sides reviewed the existing good relationship between the two countries and discussed concrete investment opportunities for further cooperation in the oil sector in Pakistan.

The Kuwaiti minister for petroleum also called on the foreign minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali. The foreign minister appreciated the valuable supported extended by Kuwait on the question of Kashmir at the ICO [Islamic Conference Organization] summit held in Casablanca and at the ICO foreign ministers conferences. The Kuwaiti minister reiterated the support of his country on the issue and said that it should be solved in accordance with UN resolutions.

Japan To Give $300-Million Loan for 2 Years

BK1001044195 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 10 Jan 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Ryutaro Hashimoto, Japanese minister for international trade and industry, met Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in Islamabad yesterday and told her that Japan will give a $300-million loan for two years to help Pakistan in its economic development policies. The fund is in addition to the assistance being given to Pakistan by the Government of Japan under direct foreign aid.

Official Denies Afghan Mercenaries Sent to Chechnya

BK0501163295 Hong Kong AFP in English 1616 GMT 5 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan 5 (AFP)—Pakistan on Thursday [5 January] denied that Afghan refugees on its territory were being sent to fight Russian forces in the breakaway republic of Chechnya.

"Pakistan is not aware of any such movement of Afghan refugees from its territory to Chechnya," a foreign ministry spokesman said, responding to allegations to that effect by Moscow. "We have categorically advised the Russian authorities of this fact."

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Grigory Karasin said earlier in Moscow that mercenaries were being recruited in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Jordan and in refugee camps in Pakistan.

Iran was blamed for allowing the transit of mercenaries across its territory to Russia.

Pakistan had previously expressed concern over the bloodshed in the Chechen conflict and called for a peaceful, negotiated settlement. Several religious groups here have voiced support for Chechen Moslems.

Sri Lanka

Government Cease-Fire With LTTE Reportedly Holds

Newspapers Commend Peace Efforts

BK1001023595 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 9 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As the cessation of hostilities between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, LTTE, came into effect yesterday, the guns were silent in the north and east and no incidents were reported from the region during the past 24 hours. The entire region has been incident-free since the truce came into force at 12 midnight on Saturday [7 January], a high-ranking military official said. The LTTE leadership has in radio messages ordered its cadres in the north and east not to venture out but to remain in their camps and other designated areas. Disciplinary action will be taken against cadres who violate the cessation of hostilities, the LTTE hierarchy has warned. A top military official based in the north said that all offensive operations have been halted since the truce came into effect. Troops are within their respective areas of control.

Almost all Sri Lankan newspapers have commended the cessation of hostilities by the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Virtually every paper devoted yesterday's editorial to the peace process.

THE DINAMINA, a leading Sinhala newspaper, said the cessation of hostilities is good news for all Sri Lankans. It is also a victory for the masses who elected the People's Alliance government. The editorial goes on to point out the significance of the fact that hostilities ceased on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister H.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. The newspaper concluded by expressing hope that the government will usher in a new era in which all Sri Lankans can live in peace and harmony.

In its editorial, THE SUNDAY TIMES commented on the 40 billion rupee development scheme to be implemented in the north. It pointed out the importance of winning the hearts and minds of the people in the north and east. The editorial observed the (?distressed) people are made full-fledged citizens of the country with equal rights and opportunities then the battle would be won.

THE LANKA DEEPA, another Sinhala weekly, has said that uncertainty about the future should not in any way be allowed to impede the peace process. It pointed out the importance of a political solution to the ethnic problem. The editorial said that it would be far easier to win the hearts of the people in the north and east than to win back their territory through force.

THE SUNDAY LEADER, recently commenced publication, however, was critical of the government's development plan for the north. It stressed that at least a sum of the 40 billion rupees pledged to the north should be diverted to the east, where a civil administration is already in place. The editorial observed that the Tamil people will prefer to see democracy rather than [words indistinct].

The SUNDAY ISLAND also cautioned the government on its efforts on peace. It concluded that President Chandrika Kumaratunga would achieve [words indistinct] for bringing about the cessation of hostilities. The newspaper warned, however, that she must continue to negotiate sincerely. The president must not forget that Sri Lanka's unitary status is not negotiable.

[Words indistinct], a tabloid, said that a greater awareness among the majority Sinhalese for the need to safeguard the rights to Tamils in the north had been a key factor in bringing the peace process to this stage. The LTTE and the Tamil people have also realized that negotiations rather than guerrilla warfare will help them secure their rights.

Tamil Parties Express Optimism

BK1001141395 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 10 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Several Tamil political parties have expressed optimism that the ongoing cessation of hostilities between the government and the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] would bring lasting peace in the country. Leader of the EPDP [Eelam People's Democratic Party], Douglas Devananda, told the SLBC [Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation] that the Tamil-speaking people have confidence that the initiative taken by the government and the LTTE would bring favorable result. He said that he has confidence that the ethnic crisis is going to be solved through democratic means. Commenting on the cessation of hostilities, the leader of the TULF [Tamil United Liberation Front], M. Sivasithamparam, said that the initiatives taken by both parties (?is aimed) at national integration. The chief of the Ceylon Tamil Congress, Kumar Ponnambalam, said that the cessation of hostilities is only a beginning to the end of the ethnic problem. He also said that there would be a cease-fire and a truce, and the peace talks will continue. A representative of the PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam], Markanda Devadas, said that while the cessation of hostilities was in progress action should be taken to safeguard the democratic rights of the other organized [word indistinct].

Cease-Fire Continues To Hold

BK1101121295 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0758 GMT 11 Jan 95

["Pool Item"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, 11 Jan—No incidents have been reported during the last 24 hours from Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka and the cessation of hostilities between the government and LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] is holding.

Military spokesman, Brigadier Nihal Jayakody, told LANKAPUVATH Wednesday [11 January] that radio communication links had been established between the military and the LTTE's field commanders.

The government ban on fishing in the North and East has been lifted in a total area of 500 [word indistinct].

3rd Round of Talks Scheduled

BK1101130095 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Two of the six committees to deal with violations of the cessation of hostilities between the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] and the government troops will be formed in the next few days. The first two committees will be set up in the Batticaloa-Amparai area and in the Trincomalee area. Each committee will have five representatives—two from the government, two from the LTTE, and one foreign representative.

According to the defense secretary, General Hamilton Wanasinghe, these two committees will have foreign representatives from Norway. He said about four representatives from Canada will arrive shortly. The other committees will cover areas of Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, and Mullaitivu. The cessation of hostilities commenced at midnight on Saturday [8 January]. According to the agreement reached between President Chandrika Kumaratunga and LTTE leader, V. Prabhakaran, the cessation of hostilities will last for a period of (?two) weeks. However, the situation will be reviewed when the government officials have their third round of talks with the LTTE on Saturday in Jaffna.

Government Accused of Violating Truce

BK1101151395 Hong Kong AFP in English 1451 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Jan 11 (AFP)—Sri Lanka's separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas accused the Colombo government of violating a truce agreement by restricting fishing in the troubled northern waters Tamil sources here said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) announced over their clandestine radio, the Voice of Tigers, that the government violated their pact by imposing limitations on fishing.

"We agreed to keep away from army and navy camps ... But the government has violated the agreement by limiting fishing for 12 hours during day time," the Voice of Tigers said in a broadcast monitored by Tamil civilians.

Under a truce pact between President Chandrika Kumaratunga and LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran effective Sunday [15 January], the security forces agreed not to obstruct "legitimate and bonafide fishing activity in specified areas."

The Tiger radio said LTTE's chief negotiator Thamil Chelvam, who is also the head of the Tiger political section, had already written to the government lodging a protest.

Following the truce agreement, the navy declared areas where fishing could be carried out in shallow waters. However, a ban on deep sea fishing was not lifted by the navy.

The LTTE protest came as a government minister expressed the hope that the government would be able to establish a permanent "cessation of hostilities" as they press ahead with moves to end the dragging ethnic conflict.

More than 30,000 people have died during the LTTE's bitter struggle to establish an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the past 23 years.

Police Step Up Security Ahead of Pope Visit

BK1101124795 Hong Kong AFP in English 1224 GMT 11 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Jan 11 (AFP)—Sri Lankan police Wednesday [11 January] expressed concern over growing tension in a Catholic-dominated region near here after a Buddhist temple and a church were attacked ahead of a visit by Pope John Paul II.

A Buddha statue was set on fire at a temple in Seeduwa, just north of here, as police kept watch on potential trouble-makers ahead of this month's Papal visit. The attack came barely 16 hours after a church was torched in the area.

Additional police were deployed in the temple run by Buddhist monk Ellegamuwa Lankananda following a pre-dawn raid on the place of worship by unknown persons, officials said.

"We have placed more men in the area. Whatever the reason we are not taking any chances. We know that mischief-makers are waiting for a chance to create tension," said a police officer in the region.

Lankananda is at the forefront of a campaign by Buddhist monks protesting against the Pope's visit because of what they described as anti-Buddhist passages in a book authored by the Pontiff.

But police chief Frank de Silva ruled out any links between the two incidents and the Pontiff's visit. He attributed the attacks to a dispute between Catholics and Buddhists over some construction work in the area.

"I cannot read any connection between these attacks and the Pope's visit and I don't want anyone to read any other motives into this either," de Silva said, adding that Lankananda had been under surveillance and was facing fraud charges in connection with a job-recruitment racket.

The government has mapped out an unprecedented security cover for the 24-hour visit by the Pope in connection with the beatification of a local priest, Father Joseph Vaz.

The security arrangements, the biggest ever for a visiting dignitary, were being already worked out with several police deputy inspector-generals entrusted with tasks ranging from security to crowd control, police said.

At least half the 60,000-strong police force is to be deployed for the various religious ceremonies that would be attended by the Pope. Some 500,000 are expected to converge at an open-air beatification ceremony in Colombo.

Police have asked the list of guests staying at hotels in the vicinity of the sea-front promenade where the main religious ceremony would be held.

The monks were objecting to references made in his book "Crossing the Threshhold of Hope" about the state of Nirvana or ultimate detachment from the world, which Buddhists try to seek, and which the Pope has described as "bad".

The Buddhist laity had called on the Pope to apologise to the Buddhist community, "whose religious susceptibilities he has outrageously injured."

About 70 percent of Sri Lanka's 17 million population follow the Buddhist faith while Catholics make up about seven percent.

However, despite boycott calls by the Buddhist clergy, the People's Alliance government has said it was determined to go ahead with the visit in the context of a Sri Lankan head of state welcoming the head of the Vatican state.

The government has declared the two days that the Pope will spend in Colombo as public, bank and mercantile holidays.

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